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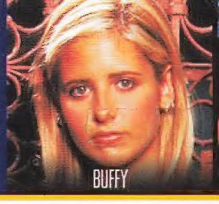
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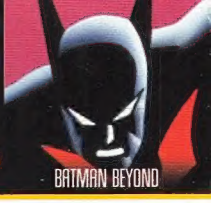
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COUNTDOWN TO WIZARD 2000
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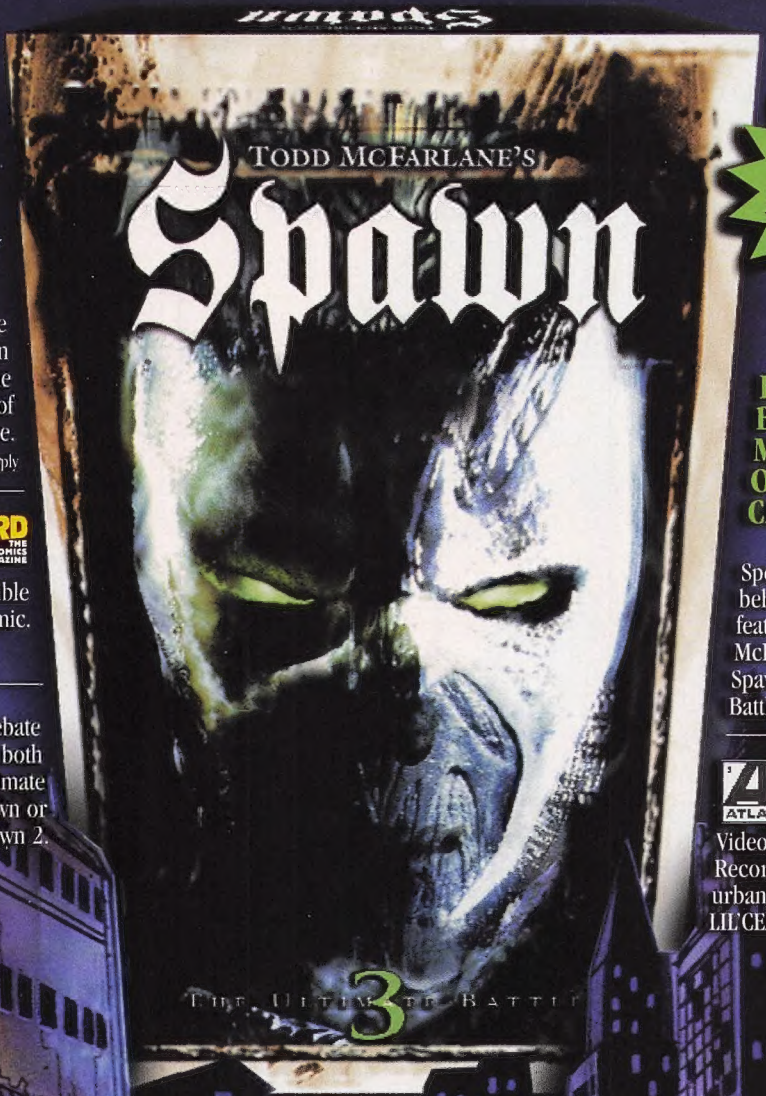

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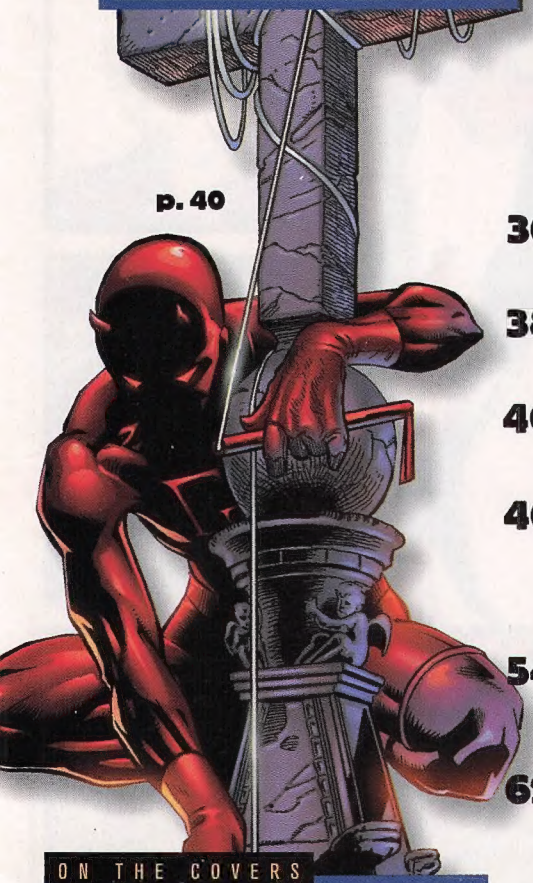
HEY, OVER HERE!

Tying into our celebratory, year-long countdown to the new millennium, *Wizard* looks toward the future in each 1999 issue. Check out our **"Marvel Knights: Year Two"** feature on **page 40** to take a peek at Ennis and Dillon's Punisher, as well as some of the hottest comics coming down the pike next year. Only two more months till *Wizard* 2000...

COUNTDOWN TO WIZARD 2000

ISSUES TO GO 02



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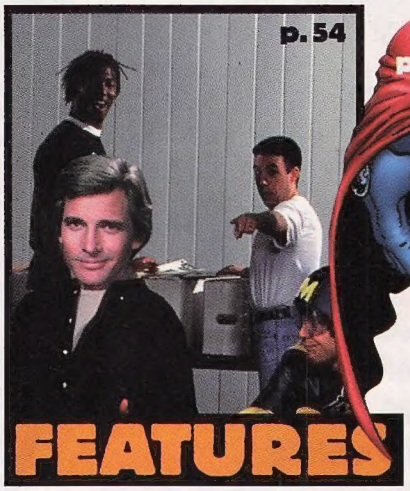

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Want the next-best thing to a "Matrix" sequel? Read the official comic books on the Web. **By Scott Brick**

40 TAKING AIM
Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon's Punisher marks Marvel Knights' second year. **By Scott Brick**

46 THE WIZARD Q&A: JEPH LOEB AND JOE KELLY
New Superman writers Joe Kelly and Jeph Loeb fly to Metropolis to revive the Man of Steel...and maybe Krypto too. **By Jim McLauchlin**

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Our resident monkey-squeezer sets off on his latest and greatest adventure. Be afraid. Be very afraid. **By the *Wizard* Staff**

62 TOTAL TELEVISION
Your guide to this fall's hottest comic-related TV series. **By Patrick Sauriol with Janet Hetherington**

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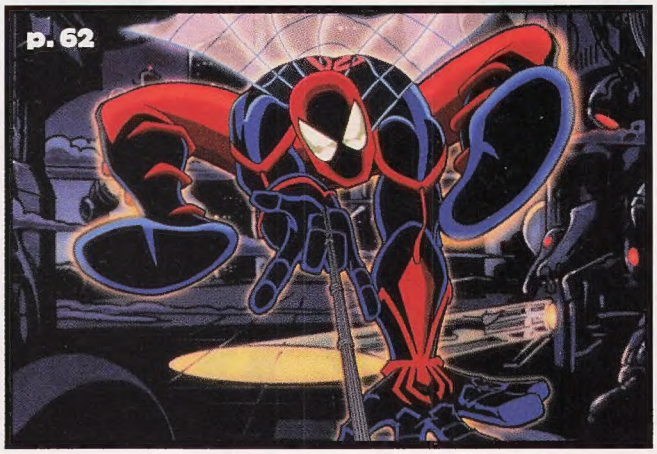
ON THE COVERS

Superman (left) was illustrated by Ed McGuinness and Jason Martin and colored by Digital Chameleon. To find out what's in store for the Man of Steel under the new Superman creative teams, flip to our Jeph Loeb and Joe Kelly Q&A on **page 46.** The animated **Avengers** were supplied by Saban Entertainment. To get the scoop on the "Avengers" cartoon series and all your other favorite comic-related TV shows, check out our mega Fall TV preview on **page 62.**



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KABUKI #1/2

Dance fever! Here's your *only* chance to get the exclusive *Kabuki* #1/2 comic, celebrating Kabuki's legacy narrated as a Japanese folktale. It's a story tying into the new *Kabuki: Scarab* series by creator David Mack. Move to **page 80** for more details.

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PUBLISHER'S LETTER

Michael Turner (left) and Gareb

"HEY, MIKE--HOW ABOUT I TRIM THOSE SIDEBURNS FOR YA?"

REALLY BIG SHOW

Whew! For about two weeks before the Wizard World '99 convention, I just could not wait to get there. Now that it's over, I can't believe it went by so fast! The show was amazing. I want to thank everyone who attended: fans, creators, publishers, special guests, volunteers, *Wizard* staff, dealers and friends who just tagged along for the ride. Without everyone's help, the show couldn't have been such a huge success.

The show had so many great guests I couldn't name 'em all, but I'm sure in the convention wrap-up in this ish you'll see just who was there. My highlights include Kevin "Big Sexy" Nash holding me upside down by my ankles like a sack of potatoes, Ray (Darth Maul) Park putting me in a headlock and nearly breaking my neck, and Jimmy Palmiotti and Nelson DeCastro recording prank phone calls to comic industry bigwigs and playing the tapes at the *Wizard* Fan Awards.

If you're there next year you can be a part of it. We had fans come in from over 47 states—only Alaska, Hawaii and one other state (I can't remember which) were not represented. And there were fans from over 10 countries—wow!

There are only two months to go till our big millennium edition of *Wizard*, sure to knock your socks off. This month around, we have a great fall TV preview so you know how to spend your valuable time when you're not reading comics. Then check out our feature on all the great talent flocking to Marvel Knights, Round 2! And hey, remember that cool movie, "The Matrix"? Well, we give you the scoop on the comic spin-off. You can also thrill to the further adventures of the hero of the next millennium—Keep-Squeezin'-Them-Monkeys Lad—and read our Q&A with Jeph Loeb and Joe Kelly, the men who are going to take Superman up, up and away to new heights! It's great stuff!!

See ya!

Gareb Shamus

P.S. Don't miss our great *Kabuki* #1/2 offer in this magazine! This David Mack guy is going places!

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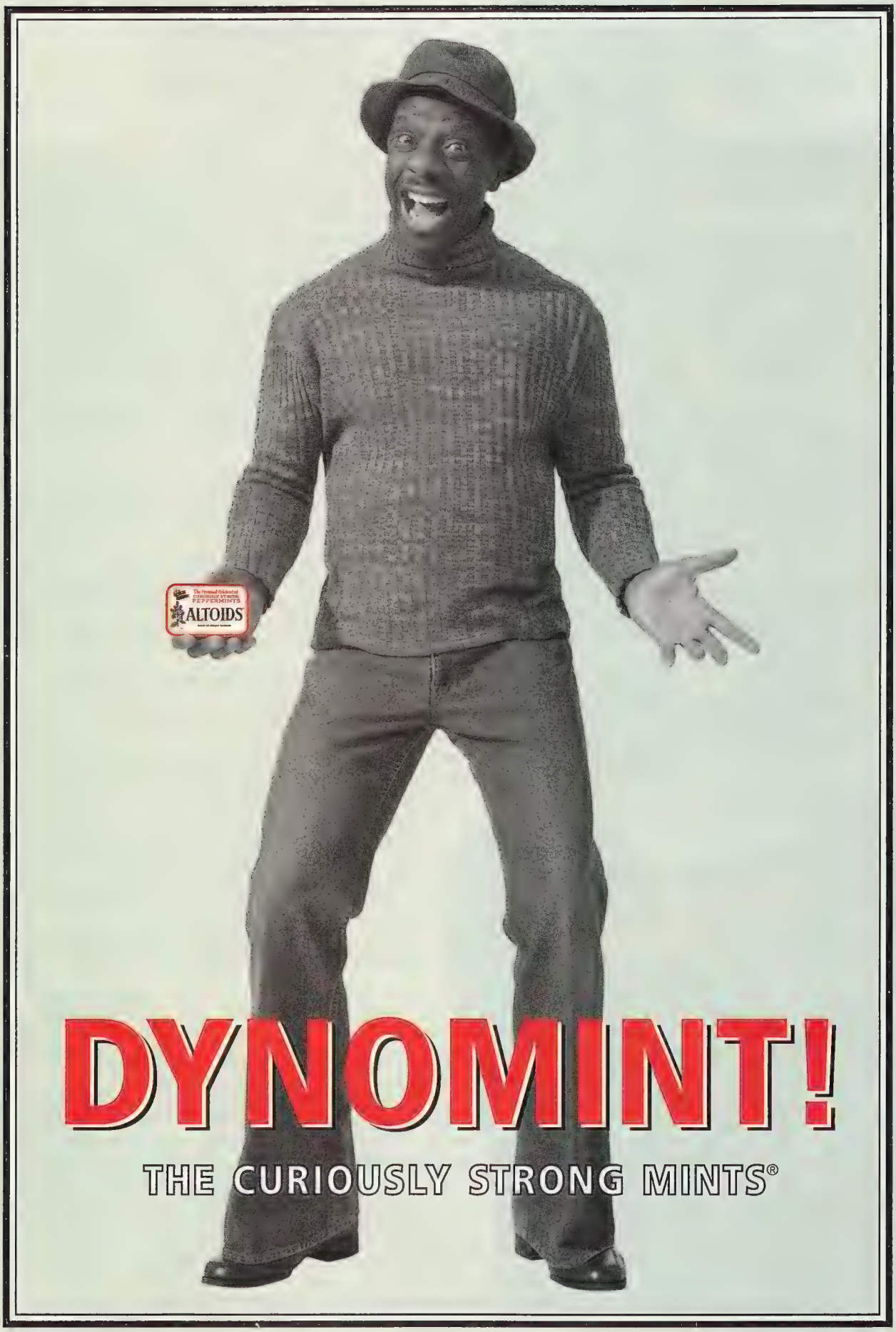

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MAGIC WORDS

WOLVERINE WANNABES... MARVEL: ALL COKED UP... AND CHOY LI FUT!

No! No! No, you cannot be Wolverine!

For some silly-ass reason, as soon as word hit Geek Street that the "X-Men" movie was being cast, I got résumés. Like, 50 résumés. And every one of them came from some short guy who was more than happy to tell me about all the high-school plays he had been in, hoping that somehow I could help him land the role of Wolverine on the silver screen. Well, I got some bad news for ya: Whereas I have the ear of everyone in the comic business and am able to make Bob Harras jump through hoops on a whim, a movie mogul I ain't. My sphere of influence, although large, impressive and fearsome, does not extend to helping people land the Wolvie part in an "X-Men" movie. So there.

But I might be able to help someone looking to play the role of Rogue. My casting couch is open. Rowrrr!

Dear Wizard Folks,

Since the end of the century is mere months away, it seems the right time to put together a list of the 10 most influential superheroes of all time. The list is as follows:

10) The (Silver Age) Flash: Not only did his appearance start the first revival in comic superheroes, but his comics used actual physics principles.

9) Namor, the Sub-Mariner: One of the first consistent superpowered heroes in comics.

8) Robin: If he wasn't the first superhero sidekick, he was certainly the most popular.

7) Captain America: One of the first superheroes to be used as a symbol of his country, he's still used that way today.

6) Wonder Woman: Not the first female superhero, but definitely the most popular.

5) Spawn: He symbolizes the "dark" trend that started in the early '90s, and he's the most popular hero created outside Marvel or DC.

4) Wolverine: He started the "anti-hero" trend in comics in the late '70s. The Punisher would also make a good choice here.

3) Spider-Man: The first superhero with problems in his everyday life. He started the "real problems" trend, and showed that being a superhero isn't always what it's cracked up to be.

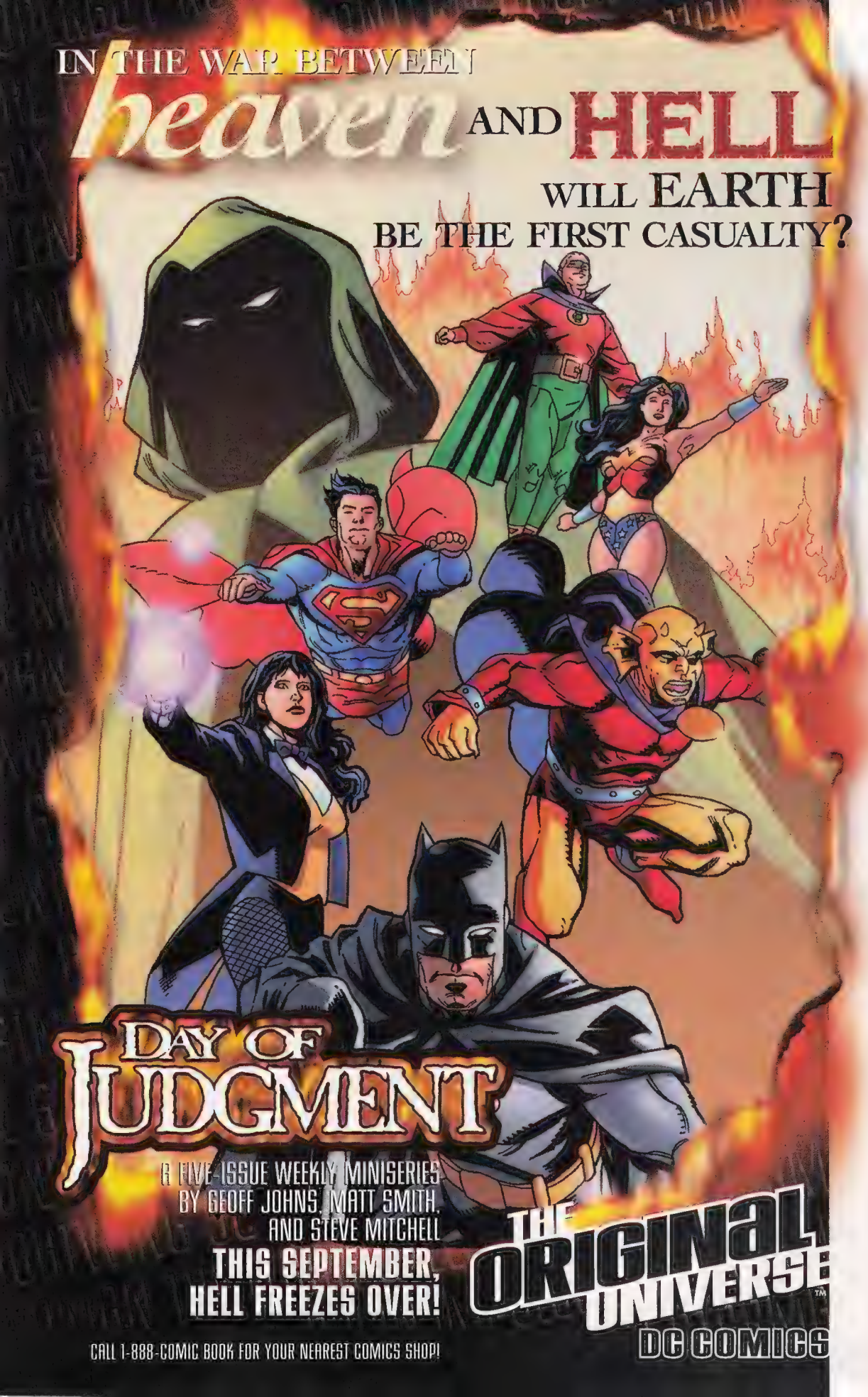
2) Batman: The original dark hero. He started what Wolverine and Spawn would later take to the next step.

1) Superman: Although there were a few superheroes before he was invented, he was the act to follow after he came around.

Keith Gatchel
Rockton, IL

Interesting. I think your list works pretty well as a "Top 10." I think it works even *better* as a "Top Eight."

It's hard to dispute the massive and lasting impact of Superman, Batman, Spidey, Wolvie, Wonder Woman, Cap, Robin, and the Silver Age Flash. And the categories you selected for each fit pretty well, too. But I don't see what Namor or Spawn really bring to the table. And as to Spawn's being the "most popular hero created outside Marvel or DC," well...there was a Big Red Cheese called Captain Marvel created at Fawcett Comics. And once upon a time, back in the 1940s and '50s, *Captain Marvel Adventures* and *Whiz Comics* were selling, oh, about a million copies a month—a number that *Spawn* and *Spawn: The Undead* haven't quite touched yet.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BUNNY AWARD

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Jim takes his favorite letter and spotlights it here. There's no logic attached to this, nor is there a prize.

Dear Jim,

On the cover of the new *Hulk* #1, instead of the usual Comics Code Authority stamp, there's a different stamp stating that the comic is approved by the Comic Craft Authority. Is this another name for the Comics Code? Or another example of how Richard Starkings and Comicraft is taking over the world? I'd appreciate an explanation.

Taylor Porter
thetay@yahoo.com

An explanation you shall have! Richard Starkings, comic letterer to the world, disavows all knowledge. "I had nothing to do with that book," he says. What Starkings *did* do was design the covers for Marvel's "Heroes Return" books in late 1997. Since Starkings had no official Comics Code Authority stamp to work with at the time, he slapped in a Comic Craft Authority stamp, figuring someone at Marvel would replace it. Never happened. Both *Avengers* #1 and *Captain America* #1 shipped with Comic Craft stamps. So what happened with *Hulk*? "It was another #1 issue, so I suppose someone in Marvel production must have used the old file," Starkings says.

So the mighty hand of Comicraft reaches even to books it never touched! Eerie. And in a related story, Starkings' Comicraft Commandos continue their conquest of the world, this month securing the Marvel Universe and large portions of Utah.

Short answer: No.

Longer answer: When Marvel was bought by Toy Biz (a company, ironically enough, that Marvel used to own) back in February of 1999, the House of Ideas paid off enough debt to get out of Chapter 11 bankruptcy. And even though most geeks were screaming "The end is near!" when Marvel was in Chapter 11, Marvel never missed shipping books and even signed creators to mucho-moolah contracts in deals like "Heroes Return" and "Marvel Knights." So even when the company was hanging by a thread, it rather kicked ass. Now it's more stable, and all employees enjoy free Coke and Diet Coke courtesy of the new soda fountains recently installed at the Marvel offices! Just think of what a refreshed and caffeine-crazed Marvel may do now! Wah-hoo!

Dear Magic Words,

I understand everything else about the Batman "No Man's Land" storyarc, but one thing throws me: What is Gotham City's legal status? Is it a separate country? A territory? Part of Cuba?

Douglas Burck
Berry, KY

According to DC Comics, the "No Man's Land" Gotham is separate from the United States, yet still part of it. But the government will kick your ass if you try to go in. Probably the best way to think of Gotham in its present state is as a demilitarized zone, similar to the 38th parallel that separates North Korea from South Korea.

Dear Lord of the Kidney Punch,

Why didn't Stan Lee write the recent *Incredible Hulk vs. Superman* one-shot? I think he's the supreme writer amongst writers, and the best creator to handle the characters involved.

Ethaen D. Fordytu
smurfrealm@juno.com

So who goes in those other two slots? No one, I think. Looks to me like everything is covered with eight.

And who's top dog of the hero pile? For my money, it's a toss-up. Superman was the first. But Spider-Man took the idea of the superhero and revolutionized it, turning it into something never seen before. I don't think you would have had Spider-Man if Superman hadn't come first. But I'm sure that comics wouldn't be around today in their present form if there were no Spider-Man.

One way or another, it's a good topic for debate. So debate away. We'll run some letters in a future "Magic Words."

Dear Jim,

Is Marvel Comics still bankrupt?

Paul Wind
Arlington, VA

Interestingly enough, *Incredible Hulk vs. Superman* writer Roger Stern left room for Stan. Stern planned a framing sequence at the beginning and end of the book that he invited Stan to script. But due to his numerous public appearances, Stan couldn't fit the comic into his schedule. Maybe next time.

And speaking of Superman...

Dear Jim,

I'm an avid fan of Superman. Well, let me rephrase that: I'm an avid fan of Superman when he's written correctly. And no

BUNNY PHOTO: PAUL SCHRADI

HEY! IT'S PEN PALS...

Send your name, address, age, sex and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o the "Magic Words" address at the end of this column (put your age on the envelope). The only way to get your Internet address listed instead is to post your info in the Pen Pals board on America Online's "Wizard World" forum (keyword: Wizard; look in the Wizard Bulletin Board, under Message Boards). **Pre-'98 entrants:** Please resend your entries.

one seems to do this job better than Alan Moore. Aside from "For the Man Who Has Everything" (*Superman Annual* #11), "The Jungle Line" (*DC Comics Presents* #85) and "Whatever Happened to the Man of Tomorrow" (*Superman* #423 and *Action Comics* #583), has this genius penned any other Superman tales? I know that he's refused to work on DC properties since the ownership troubles with *Watchmen*, but are there additional Superman stories written by him previously?

Frank Verano
Bensalem, PA

Just a couple. Moore did a few text-only Superman stories for some British DC annuals in the early 1980s, and Superman has a brief guest appearance in *Saga of the Swamp Thing* #23. In the future? Don't expect Moore to knock on Big Blue's door. "I really have no desire to write Superman," Moore says. "For one thing, my relationship with DC is tenuous on a good day. And the Superman I see in comics today is not the character I'm interested in. He's just not my cup of tea."

So if you're cravin' a Moore Superman, you may wanna cast a glance in the direction of *Supreme*. Moore wrote #41-#56 of the series, and is currently writing *Supreme: The Return* for Awesome Entertainment. The character bears a passing resemblance to the Man of Steel. "I know many people said, 'Oh! Here's Alan doing the Superman stories he wants to do, but can't,'" Moore says. "But I did things with Supreme I never could have done with Superman. I was able to tailor continuity and back-continuity to create what I wanted. If someone at DC would call and ask, 'Would you rather be writing Superman?,' I would have to say no."

Dear Jim-Man-Type-Guy,

What style of martial arts does *Fathom* writer/artist Michael Turner know, and would he be willing to teach it to me?

Kenn O'Neal II
Lodi, CA

Michael Turner is an expert in both Tai Chi and the Chinese Kung Fu system called Choy Li Fut. But the former instructor has hung up his belt. "I taught it to many guys for many years," Turner says. "But it takes a lot of time. Now that I'm doing *Fathom*, I don't have the time I used to."

He also doesn't want to bruise them tender penciling knuckles by breaking boards and stuff. "Hey, I'm an artist, not an ass-kicker," he says. "I leave that to other guys."

CASSANDRA HUFF
Age: 13 Sex: Female
5009 Pensicola Blvd.
Dayton, OH 45439
Likes: *Spawn*, X-titles, *Daredevil*

BONNIE J. CRESSLER
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Houston, TX 77066-3638
Likes: *The Darkness, Darkchylde, Deadpool*

CHRIS WEST
Age: 17 Sex: Male
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Williamsburg, VA 23188
Likes: *The Darkness, JLA*

JONATHAN CLIFTON
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Fort Payne, AL 35968
Likes: *Spider-Man, X-Men, JLA*

NESTOR CORAZA
Age: 21 Sex: Male
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Houston, TX 77084
Likes: *Witchblade, Preacher, The Darkness*

VENTROS
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Stowe, PA 19464
Likes: *Magic, InQuest*, Death

JOE ALLARD
Age: 26 Sex: Male
2 Jamieson St.
Caledonia, Ontario, CANADA
N3W-2K2
Likes: Spider-Man, Lady Death

Dear Jim,

How do comic pencilers keep from getting finger- and palm-prints all over their work? My stuff always gets smudged pretty bad when I try to draw.

Richard T. White Jr.
Washington, NC

The simplest method? Try drafting powder, which is a canned concoction made of talcum powder and teeny-weeny chunks of ground-up erasers. Sprinkle some on your work and it should help keep things nice and clean for ya.

Beyond that, legendary artist and educator Joe Kubert has another tip for ya: "Work with a hard enough lead," Kubert says. "I recommend nothing softer than a 2H pencil. Anything softer, and your marks will be going all over the board." Or you could wear "animator's gloves"—fine cotton gloves that absorb the sweat and oils from your hands before they can smear anything. "But those are only used in an extreme kind of situation," Kubert says.

Joe oughtta know. His first job in comics—when he was at the tender age of 12!—was erasing smudges and doing cleanup work on pages in Will Eisner's comic studio back in 1938.

Dear Jim,

Where the heck is Brett Booth? He's one of my favorite artists. Is he working on anything new?

Thomas Gray
Mt. Ranier, MD

Yep. He's working on *X-Men Unlimited*. Booth becomes the regular artist on the lead stories in the book effective with October's issue #25.

Hey Jim!

I have some questions for ya:

1) What's a Cosmic Cube?
2) When is "Dogma," the new Kevin Smith movie, coming out?
3) What's your favorite baseball team?
4) Why did Pamela Anderson Lee do it?
5) Why do they call you "Jim McLauchlin"?
6) Is there going to be a new "Blade" movie? The first one kicked ass!

Matt Haight
mdhaight@epix.net

I have some answers for ya:

1) A nifty little Marvel Universe artifact that can both alter reality and mess the Red Skull up something fierce every time he tries to use it. When last seen in *Captain America* #19, the Cube was on Korvac's exploding spaceship. But the theory is that due to its immensely powerful nature, the Cube survived the explosion. It's currently missing in action, but will probably show up again just in time to make life suck for someone.

2) The second week of October, 1999.

3) My beloved Minnesota Twins.

4) For the money.

5) 'Cause that's what my momma named me.

6) All signs point to yes. "Blade" screenwriter, *JSA* co-writer and tattooed wonder David Goyer has turned in a script for a "Blade 2" movie. If all goes well, Marvel's vampire hunter could be back on the big screen by mid-2001.

Dear Wizardos 'Tardos,

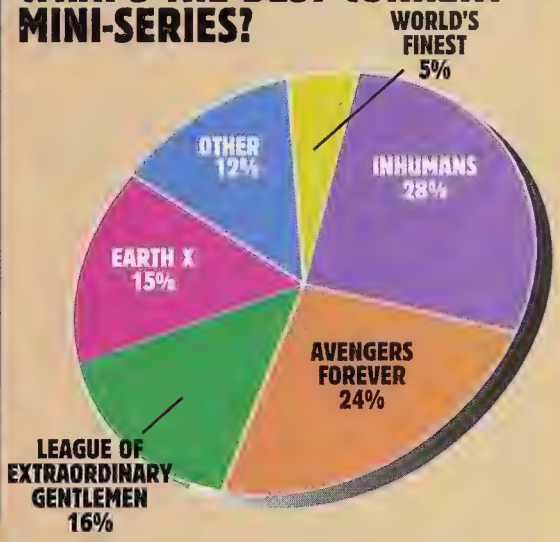
Is there any chance I could draw a cover for you guys? I do an awesome Wolverine! I could even throw in some extra hair on his arms at no extra charge if you want.

Rocky Marion
Talmadge, NE

SURVEY SAYS

ONLINE QUESTION OF THE MONTH

WHAT'S THE BEST CURRENT MINI-SERIES?



Even Black Bolt would squeal like a giddy schoolgirl with happiness.

With the multiplific mini-series flying around these days, this month's online poll (check it out at http://www.wizardworld.com) asked you, the readers, which one is your hands-down favorite.

In a tight finish, *Inhumans* beat out *Avengers Forever* 28% to 24%. One fanboy called it "an intricately woven story, combining multiple viewpoints into a cohesive tale of politics and morality." Which means he likes it, by the way.

This month's wrath was dumped onto that craptastic mini, *Spider-Man: Chapter One*. It garnered some snide remarks and five votes *against* it. "It's like they took all of DC's Book of Bad Ideas and gave it to Spidey. What's next, Spider-Man Red/Spider-Man Blue?" asked one irate e-mailer. Byrned again. ■ NACHIE CASTRO

ISAIAH MEDINA
Age: 14 Sex: Male
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Likes: Spider-titles, *Spawn*, anime

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Likes: *Spawn, Lobo, Milk and Cheese*

WILLIAM JOSEPH HOLTZAPFEL
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Likes: *Generation X, X-Men, Gen13*

JOSH SMITH
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Manhattan Beach, CA 90266
Likes: *Darkchylde, Iron Man, JLA*

ANDY DANTO
Age: 13 Sex: Male
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Pittsburgh, PA 15215
Likes: *Generation X, Darkchylde*, Spider-titles

MARTI BALLOVERAS
Age: 15 Sex: Male
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New York, NY 10019
Likes: *Danger Girl, Gen13*, She-Hulk

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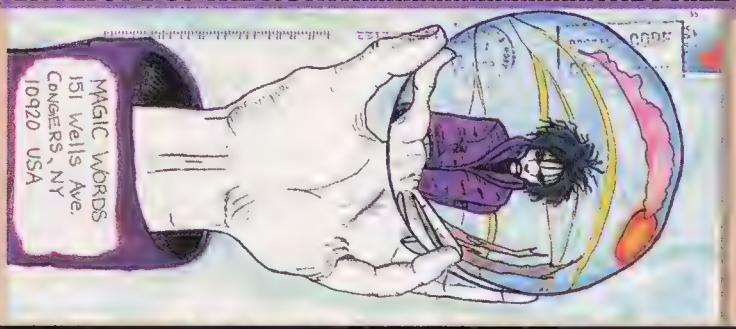
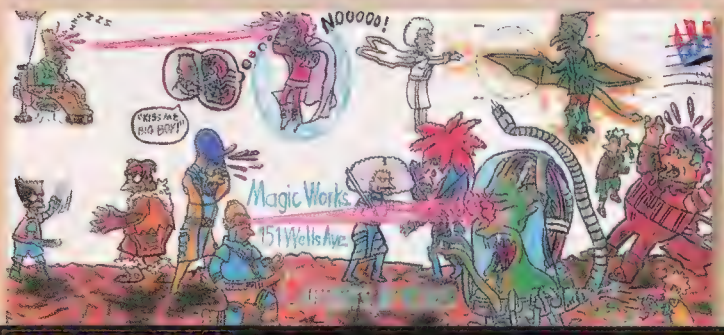
LETTER ART

Each fan who has his or her letter art printed this month wins a copy of this month's issue of *Wizard* signed by the entire *Wizard* creative staff! The talented creator of this month's best envelope will win a new Iron Man Mini-Bust from Bowen Designs. Man, Bowen Designs sure is generous to donate such cool stuff. Wonder if we can get 'em to do a D-Man bust next? Artists: Please include a clearly printed return address and a list of characters depicted on the back of the envelope. And send us yer checks for the Shamus-McLauchlin 2000 presidential bid!

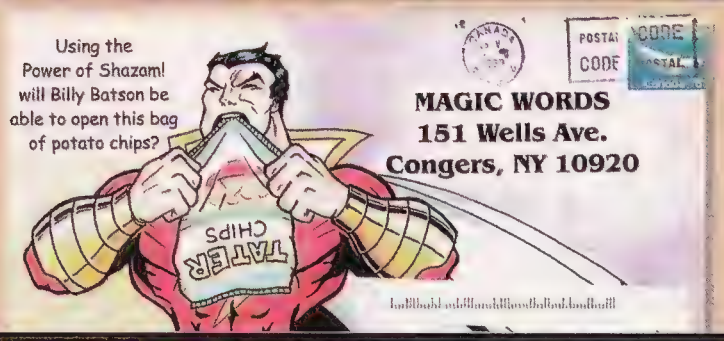
ENVELOPE OF THE MONTH.....THE PRIZE



MORPHEUS Erica Stibich, Burnaby, British Columbia, CANADA



THE SIMPSONS Kenya Lige, Montgomery, AL



SHAZAM Tony Estevez, Edmonton, Alberta, CANADA

FANTASTIC FOUR Chip Telano, Marrero, LA

No thanks. If we want extra arm hair, we'll go get some French broads.

Dear Jim,

1) Does a *Chasing Amy* comic book actually exist, or was the one shown at the end of the "Chasing Amy" movie just a mock-up?

2) Is it just me, or does Wizard Chairman/CEO Gareb Shamus look a lot like Joxer (as played by Ted Raimi) from "Xena: Warrior Princess"?

Robert Chappell Jr.
Mountain City, TN

1) A teensy bit of a *Chasing Amy* comic exists. *Madman* artist Mike Allred (who did the piece supposedly drawn by Holden McNeil in the movie) did two pages plus a cover for the flick. A full story may follow. "Perhaps oneday, we'll print it up for *Oni Double Features*," says "Amy" writer/director Kevin Smith.

2) It's just you. Actually, Gareb looks a lot more like Chip from "My Three Sons" on a normal day. But when he dresses up in that "I Dream of Jeanie" harem-girl outfit, he does look a bit like Gabrielle, the sidechick from "Xena." So, you're no too far off base.

But it would appear that I've wandered a bit off base. Must be time to go. Hang loose, and remember that until next month, I remain...

—Jim McLauchlin

Wizard *Senior Staff Writer Jim McLauchlin knows the difference between right and wrong. He's right, and you're wrong.*

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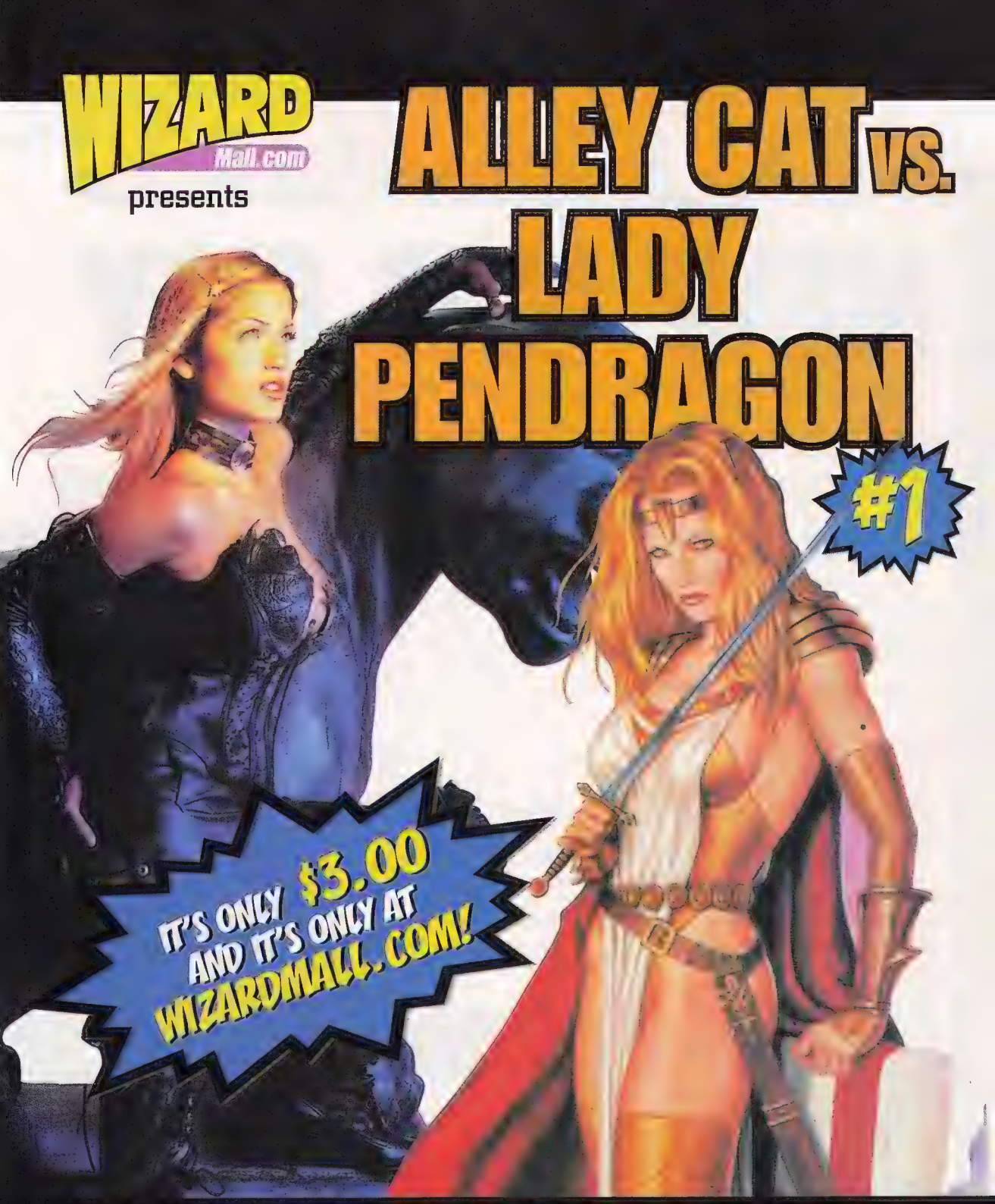

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NEW BAT CITY

Batman books rebuild with new creators, new gadgets, new Gotham City

You destroyed Gotham City, gambled big on the yearlong "No Man's Land" storyline and put Batman smack-dab in the comics spotlight. Dennis O'Neil, what're you gonna do for an encore?

"We're *not* going to rest on our laurels," said O'Neil, Batman group editor. "We're going to make year 2000 as innovative as any in Batman's 61 years."

Year 60 presents a tough act to follow. Fans have fallen in love with "No Man's Land," 1999's story featuring Bats holding together an earthquake-devastated Gotham cut off from the nation. But a new recipe is needed for the new millennium. And the Batman cookbook calls for all-new books with different formats, exciting environments and cool gadgets.

NEW BOOKS

"We're consciously giving each book its own identity," O'Neil stated. "The differences will be dramatic and readily apparent." That having been said, the new lineup come January is...

• ***Batman*** by writer Larry Hama (*Wolverine*) and penciler Scott McDaniel (*Nightwing*). "*Batman* will be slam-bam superhero action," O'Neil noted. Hama agrees. "It's regular, long-underwear superhero stuff, mostly self-contained with ongoing subplots." It's also the home of new bad guys. "There's a moratorium on most of the coolest villains for now," Hama explained. "In the last year or two, the Joker, Penguin, Bane—they've been done to death. I have to come up with new, flashy villains in keeping with the times." Look for the first new villain out of Hama's box to be a techno-terrorist bent on destroying the government.

• ***Detective Comics*** by novelist Greg Rucka and "No Man's Land" penciler Shawn Martinborough. *Detective*, according to Assistant Editor Darren Vincenzo, "will be the home of crime, cops, gritty streets and the underworld." Rucka, who hit home with *New York Times* best-selling detective novels *Finder* and *Keeper*, has plenty of experience there.

Format will also change, as Rucka's stories are 30 pages each. Every issue will also have a small backup story, making *Detective* a monthly 48-page whopper.

• ***Batman: Gotham Nights*** by writer Devin Grayson (*Titans*) and "No Man's Land" penciler Dave Eaglesham. The third core Batman title—replacing *Batman: Shadow of the Bat*—will focus on how Batman affects others' lives. "The watchwords are 'human interest' or 'different angles,'" said Vincenzo. "You'll see stories that might focus on villains, or on the shopkeeper who has an encounter with crime and with Batman."

Gotham Nights will also be larger, as "Batman: Black and White" stories will back up the lead. Editor Mark Chiarello, who shepherded 1997's popular mini-series by the same name, will line up top creators for their singular Bat-takes. Jim Lee (*Divine Right*) and Warren Ellis (*Planetary*) have already signed on.

• *Batgirl* by writers Kelly Puckett and Scott Peterson and

BAT TO THE FUTURE Batman swings into the year 2000 with a new pad, fresh wheels and Jim Lee.

"No Man's Land" penciler Damien Scott. February sees the ongoing title that "the world has been clamoring for," according to O'Neil. He promises the new Batgirl spun out of "No Man's Land" will be "as motivated as Batman. And she'll have some stuff built into her origin that'll give us a storyarc for the first year." O'Neil guaranteed evolution along with revelation. "She will be very different at the end of the year than she is at the beginning."

• ***Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight*** will return to its roots, featuring rotating creative teams on short arcs from Batman's past. O'Neil will write the first arc in 2000 featuring the first meeting between Batman and Green Arrow.

NEW GOTHAM

Although details are still tightly under wraps until December's "No Man's Land" conclusion, DC has confirmed that Gotham City will be readmitted to the United States in January 2000. Then the rebuilding begins. The new Gotham "will very much feel like you've entered the 21st century," said Vincenzo. "There'll be a certain sheen early on." But the scrub and polish will soon wear off. "The light will get darker and it will start to feel more like Gotham."

Much of the darkness comes from attitude. People who stayed in Gotham through the earthquake will be contemptuous of those returning. Chances for conflict will be plenty as the city rebuilds. "There are tremendous financial opportunities, and lots of prey for predators to prey on," said Vincenzo.

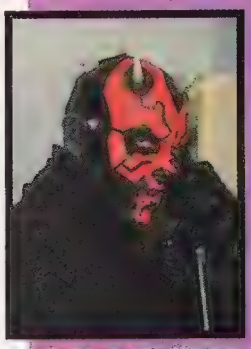
NEW GADGETS

"We have lagged behind the real world when it comes to crimefighting tools," O'Neil admitted. To make up for that lag, Batman will be getting a tech overhaul. "The new Batcave will look way different from anything previous. Much more interesting, much more modern."

To bring in new ideas, the Bat-editors are looking to creators. "We're going to specific people who are capable of doing the work we want," O'Neil said. Five different designs for a new Batmobile are already in, and even manga man Kia Asamiya (*Steam Detectives*) is working up an entry. Creators close to home are also pitching in. The new Wayne Manor, designed by Dave Eaglesham, will be based on a Scottish castle. And Batman's not the only one joining in on the fun. "We're looking at designing some very fascistic-looking police uniforms, which we will make a story point," O'Neil says.

The whole crew is still hard at work at those building blocks. "The stuff has to evolve, or it goes stale," O'Neil says. "As many changes as there were in 'No Man's Land,' there will be more in 2000. But they'll be way different. We have to make ourselves learn some new tricks."

■ DAVID SEIDMAN & JIM McLAUCHLIN



Dark Lord of the Sith dials 1-800-CALL-ATT, enjoys tremendous savings. "Though," added the halved Maul, "I still can't believe David Arquette gets Courteney Cox. There is no God."

BAT'S BOYS

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON THE COMIC INDUSTRY

As the "core" Batman books get an overhaul, so do the books that hang out in Batman's neighborhood. Here's what to look for in 2000:

ROBIN

Chuck Dixon remains as writer, joined by new artist Pete Woods (*Deadpool*). And Robin's gonna fly solo. "Tim Drake's dad is finally sending him off to boarding school. Curfew and everything," said Dixon. Might this make being Robin difficult? "For him, it sucks. But for the reader, it should give endless hours of enjoyment."

NIGHTWING

Dixon again remains on, this time linking up with artist Greg Land (*Birds of Prey*). Readers should look for a new affiliation for Dick Grayson, too. "Nightwing will be joining the police force of Blüdhaven," said *Nightwing* editor Darren Vincenzo. A new female police partner for Dick will also be introduced.

CATWOMAN

New writer Bronwyn Carlton (*Books of Faerie*) and new artist Staz Johnson (*Robin*) usher in a new take on Catty. "It's less 'What's the shiny thing I can steal this month?' You run out of things to steal," said *Catwoman* editor Matt Idelson. "It's more delving into her a bit, to show just how screwed-up a person she really is."

AZRAEL

Dennis O'Neil and Roger Robinson remain the writer-penciler team. "I'm going to give Azrael a sharply defined double identity," said O'Neil. "I want to make a demarcation between Jean-Paul Valley, who is basically a gentle, mild, guy...and Azrael, who represents vengeance and violence." ■ DS & JM

Comic fan admits costume idea "looked better on paper."

New Gods characters refuse to accept that nobody likes them. "Arghhhh! No photography!" yelled the best-left-forgotten heroes.

PHOTOS: PAUL SCHRADER

A NASTY SIX-PACK

Venom and the Sinister Six set sights on Spider-Man

Think Spider-Man has it tough now that Venom's back? Just wait till you see the villain's six new pals.

Peter Parker barely had time to adjust to the return of the evil symbiote Venom. Now the Sinister Six—a grouping of badasses Spider-Man has faced before with a variety of line-ups—will make Spidey's life downright miserable. October issues of both *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* (#12) and *Amazing Spider-Man* (#12), both written by Howard Mackie and both double-sized, will feature Venom and the Sinister Six joining forces.

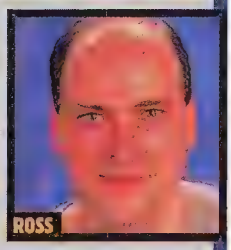
"Venom will be going along for the ride on his own agenda," said Mackie, who was quick to point out that Venom will *not* be sticking with the group after the October issues. The Six, according to Mackie, will be pulled back together by Sandman and will include Venom, Mysterio, Vulture, Kraven and Electro. Usual co-conspirator Dr. Octopus will have a key part in the formation of the Six, but will not be a part of the new team.

So how will Venom get along with his new partners in crime and, above all else, follow orders? "We're going to play to the fact that Venom is not a team player," said Mackie. "It's impossible to portray a group of villains and expect them to play nice with each other like the Avengers. Be aware that a big part of the story is to show that this group does *not* get along very well." ■CASEY SEIJAS

SIX ON THE BEACH Well, we don't know if there's really a beach, but they do have the Sandman.

THE BUZZBIN

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON THE COMIC INDUSTRY



ROSS

ROSS JOINS LIEFELD! Rumor has it that Alex Ross will join forces with Awesome Entertainment to do a three-issue, creator-owned series for next summer. Sources say Ross will join his *Earth X* writer Jim Krueger, create over 100 new characters and paint the third issue. Will the Ross Machine ever stop? Nope...

THE LOST *KINGDOM COME*! Believe it! Deep within the bowels of the DC Comics, three never-before-seen, fully painted Alex Ross *Kingdom Come* pages exist. They will be published. They're coming in 2000. Fairly warned be thee.

JIM LEE'S NEXT BOOK... just might be a hardcover graphic novel featuring a new character for Alan Moore's America's Best Comics line. The WildStorm founder is a huge fan of Moore, and reports have Lee and Moore working out details.

TROUBLE IN PARADISE? Word on the drum is that a number of WildStorm artists are looking to band together and split for another publisher. Rumor has it they are none too pleased now that WildStorm is owned by DC.

NEW JLARTIST? As the DC ball continues to bounce, we get word that penciler Bryan Hitch (*The Authority*) is in line for an assignment upgrade. Hitch could become the new *JLA* artist when new writer Mark Waid steps on in early 2000.

A NEW METROPOLIS? Could be. The Superman books get new creators and a new outlook in October. Rumored to be next on the makeover list is a facelift for Metropolis by early 2000.

PREACHER CENSORED! The portrait of Tulip's face on the cover of *Preacher* #52 looked a wee bit out of place, huh? That's 'cause DC Comics yanked the original: Little girl Tulip's papa givin' her a gun for Christmas. Think gettin' censored put the *Preacher* creators at meltdown? Nah, we hear they're actually cool with it.

CHAOS! *SUPERHEROES*? Yeah, you read that right. The horror masters of mayhem at Chaos! Comics reportedly are planning a new, superhero-based line in 2000. Chaos! President Brian Pulido is a hero geek from way back, and he's lookin' to scratch that itch.

ROSS AND KUBERT PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

THEY SAID IT

IDLE CHATTER

"NEXT, I WANNA do an Oreos ad to go with it. Maybe they'll send free cookies."
—ANDY KUBERT, who drew Spider-Man in a Marvel "got milk?" ad

THE TRUTH IS NEVER LOST.

IT IS ALWAYS RIGHT WHERE WE LEFT IT.

BUT, WE DON'T BELIEVE,
SO WE GO SEARCHING THROUGH THE LIES,
LIKE LOOKING FOR PINS IN HAYSTACKS.

WE EXPLORE DILIGENTLY ONLY WHERE WE WANT IT TO BE,
AS IF WE ARE GOING TO FIND IT THERE,
HOPING ON OUR OWN SELFISH NEEDS.

WE GAZE THROUGH THE CITIES AND WANDER THROUGH THE FOREST
UNTIL WE NO LONGER KNOW WHERE WE STAND.

THAT'S WHEN WE COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE TRUTH MUST BE LOST,
BUT, IN REALITY, IT IS WE WHO ARE LOST.

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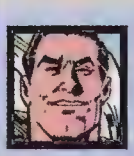
WHO'S THE NEW FLASH?

I HATE WHEN THAT HAPPENS

The Flash is dead? Then who's running around calling himself the Flash? That's what fans wanna know. Since *Flash* #150, Wally West has presumably died, replaced by this mystery man who's much older than Wally, gains the instant trust of the Golden Age Flash and Superman when he clues them in on his ID, and possesses enhanced super-speed powers. Let's line up the suspects:

BARRY ALLEN An older Flash? Trust implicitly? Sounds like the Silver Age Flash to us. Perhaps he found a way to escape the Speed Force he's been stuck in since 1985 to save his nephew Wally. **ODDS:** 2-1

WALLY WEST C'mon, like you thought he'd stay dead. Maybe it took him a lotta time and energy to escape the Speed Force (hence, the older look), and traveled back in time to save himself. **ODDS:** 4-1



CAPTAIN MARVEL Think about it: The speed of Mercury gives him Flash-like velocity. When in his Cap body, he looks 30-something. And who else would Superman and Flash trust without question? **ODDS:** 5-1

IMPULSE An older, more experienced Bart Allen could possibly do what the new Flash does. But it'd be awful tough for anyone to recognize him at a much older age. Besides, his feet are too small! **ODDS:** 7-1

JOHNNY QUICK Another Speed Force victim, but perhaps this ex-JSA member managed to cheat death with his weird-mathematical super-speed equation. **ODDS:** 10-1

HANSON Stack one brother on top of the other and these fading pop sensations can fill a Flash suit faster'n you can say "Mmm-Bop!" Or a Flash-in-the-pan suit. **ODDS:** 1 billion to one. ■ **THE *WIZARD* STAFF**

BATMAN TAKES BUS

God knows, only losers take the bus. If you're over 18, anyway.

But the Metropolitan Transit Commission of St. Paul-Minneapolis, Minn. wants to change that perception. In an effort to increase good vibes towards public transportation, a race was held recently between an MTC bus and...the Batmobile! A replica of the 1966-era classic, that is. Amazingly, the bus beat the Caped Crusader's wheels on a suburbia-to-downtown run, zipping along in a new bus-only lane while the sleek competition was stuck in traffic.

No further challenges have been announced, although the MTC is reportedly looking for the Flash's home phone number. ■ **JAKE ROSSEN**

PREACHER GOES WESTERN

Ever thought Preacher would turn cowboy?

It'll happen in December, when *Preacher* writer Garth Ennis saddles up with artistic partner-in-crime Steve Dillon to unveil a *Preacher: Tall in the Saddle* one-shot. Ennis said the flashback story involves Preacher Jesse Custer and girlfriend Tulip "not long after they first met, when they were young, in love, and car thieves." A car heist gone wrong embroils the lovebirds in a gangster's brutal horse-stealing scam.

The kicker? It's based on a true story. "I read a newspaper article about modern-day horse thieves called 'killer-buyers,' who steal horses from ranches in Texas, ship them to slaughterhouses, butcher them quite horribly, then ship the meat overseas," said Ennis. "The authorities conducted a manhunt to track down the bad guys. I thought, 'There's definitely a story in here.'"

HOLD YOUR HORSES A western-themed *Preacher* one-shot? Livestock beware!

A surprising one at that. Ennis hadn't envisioned any more Preacher specials after 1998's *Preacher: One Man's War*, but upon reading the article, his vision changed. "There's black-and-white morality," said Ennis. "It's set in the West, the characters look like cowboys out of a Wyatt Earp posse, and the villains are slimy European people. I thought, 'My God, this is *Preacher*!'" ■ **RICHARD HO**

SNEAK PREVIEW

JUST A PEEK

THE NEXT TREASURE Lara Croft needs to raid? A writer for her *Tomb Raider* ongoing series! Top Cow is still searching for an appropriate scribe for the November launch, but the pencil/ink team of Andy Park and Jon Sibal is ready to roll. So take your hands off the joystick and enjoy this preview!

WRITE NOW Lara Croft needs a good man. Or woman.

HANSON PHOTO COURTESY OF EVERETT COLLECTION

X-MENWATCH

UP-TO-THE-MINUTE COVERAGE

- The evolution of quarterly *X-Men Unlimited* continues with a new creative team for lead stories: Writer Joe Pruett (*Cable*) and artist Brett Booth (*Backlash*) enter with October's *Unlimited* #25. And #25's lead story promises close ties to *Wolverine* #145, the ol' Canucklehead's 25th-anniversary bash.
- Meanwhile, top creators continue to line up for *Unlimited* backup stories. The latest? Marvel Knights stars Paul Jenkins (*Inhumans*) and Mark Texeira (*Black Panther*) are readying a Wolverine backup story.
- Did ya see the funky flashback sequence in *Uncanny X-Men* #373? Artist Adam Kubert tossed the standard Bristol board and actually drew the four-page sequence on *cardboard* to get an old-timey feel. Look for more cool and bizarre experiments from Adam in the future.
- The prodigal son has returned, with mixed results. Cable creator Rob Liefeld's debut as *Cable* penciler with issue #71 shot sales up 10 percent. But deadline troubles have led to fill-in artists already on #72 and #73. No word yet on *Cable* #74.
- The new costume for nastybad villain Apocalypse? Marvel is calling the new look part of an "evolution" for the character. The new duds and new direction should sneak in right under the millennium wire, hitting the last week of December.

THE LATEST 'HOUR'

Chris Bachalo returns to his Vertigo roots with writer Jeph Loeb in November's three-ish *Witching Hour*. The series stars Ms. White, a modern-day witch who rights wrongs for her clients. "It's the first time I've had an opportunity to experiment with the computer," said the former X-Men artist. Take a peek. ■ JIM McLAUCHLIN

GET A CLUE Ms. White (above) gets it in the conservatory. With the lead pipe. 'Nuff said.

liar 6
image

A man's need for vengeance can consume him.

Liar Comics welcomes new artist Romano in a dark tale written by Sharon Scott & Robert Lugbihl

the Witchfinder
september

ONTHEMOVE

WHERE IS EVERYBODY?

Dan Jurgens, new *Captain America* writer, on his looser Cap take: "Cap should do the patriotic speech on page about once a year. To me, he's the guy who can fall off a building, ricochet off his shield and go bouncing through Manhattan without missing a beat. He's the ultimate action hero."

NAME	FORMER BOOK	NEW BOOK	WRITER/ ARTIST?	THE SCOOP
DAVE ABNETT & ANDY LANNING	*Resurrection Man*	*Legion of Super-heroes, Legionnaires*	writers	*Resurrection Man* six feet under, writing tandem Abnett and Lanning's impressive fill-in stint on "Legion" earns them a full-time job.
JOHN BYRNE	*Spider-Man: Chapter One*	*X-Men: Hidden Years*	writer/artist	The Byrne revolving door spins again as *Chapter One* wraps and Mr. Retro launches a new "flashback" project. And did we mention he's fired as *Hulk* writer?
GARTH ENNIS	still writes *Preacher*	*Punisher*	writer	Hello, body count! The twisted and hyper-violent mind of Ennis meets up with the premier vigilante of the Marvel Universe. Expect blood.
GARY FRANK	*Gen*[13]	*Kin*	writer/artist	Frank trades teens for cavemen: He's leaving the stability of a solid property (albeit the dysfunctional "Dawson's Creek" of comics) for a new creator-owned series about Cro-Magnons. Go figger.
DAN JURGENS	*Superman*	*Captain America, Aquaman*	writer	The revamping Super-broom has swept away this 12-year *Superman* veteran, but the versatile Jurgens surfaces with *Aquaman* and shields himself with a *Cap* assignment.
FABIAN NICIEZA	still on *Gambit*	*Thunderbolts*	writer	*Thunderbolts* fanboy #1 gets his dream job. Nicieza has been a *T-Bolts* booster since #1, but he'll shake things up with leadership trouble on the team.
JOE PRUETT	*Magneto Rex* mini-series	*Cable, X-Men Unlimited*	writer	Need an X-Men fill-in? Maybe a mini-series? Who ya gonna call? If you're Marvel, you turn to utility-guy Pruett, who now picks up a double-shot of regular work.
JOE QUESADA	still drawing *Daredevil*	writing *Iron Man*	writer/artist	We know Quesada can draw. Now he stretches his creative muscle by writing the Armored Avenger. Rumor is Quesada is tuning up with lots of booze to get the feel for tormented alcoholic Tony Stark.
BART SEARS	still drawing *Spider-Woman*	writing and drawing *Blade*	writer/artist	After falling off the planet for a few years (anybody remember *Brute and Babe*?), former fan-fave Sears makes his return with multiple monthly assignments. But can he keep it up?

BYRNE, SEARS PHOTOS BY AL ORTEGA. ENNIS, JURGENS, NICIEZA AND QUESADA [illegible]

KEVINSMITHWATCH

UP-TO-THE-MINUTE COVERAGE

- Harley Quinn Smith, the bouncing baby daughter of Kevin and Jennifer Smith, entered the world on June 26, 1999, tipping the scales at seven pounds, eight ounces. No surprise here: She's named after the famed Batman character. "No View Askew/DC crossovers are planned," Kevin said, "but she's cuter than anything ever. Ever. She's wrinkly, she's stinky and she's all ours."
- Be on the lookout for *Bartleby and Loki*, a fully painted Oni Press one-shot featuring the two angels from Smith's upcoming film, "Dogma." The movie is slated for a mid-October release, and *Bartleby and Loki* should be up by January. Smith writes and Scott Morse (*Soulwind*) provides art.
- Smith was the guest of honor at Wizard World Chicago '99. He had planned on road-tripping from his home in New Jersey to Chicago, but extra work on the ABC "Clerks" cartoon series derailed those plans. A last-minute flight plan was made, and Smith made the con just in time.
- During a recent appearance on Howard Stern's national radio show, Smith admitted that plans for him to write and direct "Fletch 3" with Chevy Chase reprising his role as a bumbling investigative journalist had fallen apart.

KEVIN SENT Smith's latest production is a real stinker.

SMITH PHOTO BY PAUL SCHIRALDI.

ACCLAIM SEEKS UNITY WITH SHOOTER

Jim Shooter has returned to the Valiant heroes he helped create, and he's doing it once again for Acclaim Comics.

Unity 2000, a six-issue mini-series debuting in November, will be written by Shooter with art by Jim Starlin and Joe Rubinstein. A prelude story will run in *Shadow Man* #3 and #4 in September and October, also written by Shooter under the pseudonym Paul Creddick.

"I'll be taking all the disparate parts of the Acclaim Universe and building a brand new one," Shooter announced. "This will give me the opportunity to do things with characters that I care a lot about that I haven't had a chance to do anything with for years." Former Editor-in-Chief Shooter was forced out of Valiant (now Acclaim) Comics in 1992.

Editor Michael Marts promised that *Unity 2000* will "bring into conflict the characters of the more recent Acclaim Universe and the original Valiant Universe, while simultaneously generating new ideas and characters that will carry Acclaim Comics into the future." Starlin had a more dynamic view of the book.

"It's gonna be wet," Starlin said. "I'm 10 pages in and there hasn't been a page that hasn't had something dripping down the side of it. The color red will feature prominently."

Shooter said he especially enjoyed writing the character of Master Darque, whom he did not create. "He turned out to be a lot of fun to write. He's an evil, manipulative, scheming, behind-the-scenes, stab-you-in-the-back kind of guy—I have a lot of experience with people like that," Shooter said in a thinly veiled barb at his former co-workers.

■ TRENT D. McNEELEY

DARQUE DAYS Shooter's *Unity 2000* reunites him with the company that sent him packing.

Ireland's greatest hero finally faces an enemy she can't defeat.

Liar

Image

Series Creator/Writer Sharon Scott returns in November with new artist- Romano!

MORE THAN MORTAL FAMINE

UPDATES AND RELEASES FROM AROUND THE INDUSTRY

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM, INC.
Comics' longest mini-series continues as October's *Cerebus #247* is part 16 of 34 in the current arc, "Going Home." As per usual, **Dave Sim** writes and draws, and we've got 53 issues to go till #300.

ALLSTAR ARENA ENTERTAINMENT
Cosmic Slam, Shortstop Squad, Super Sluggers and *Fastball Express* are four new baseball-themed comics featuring major league stars the likes of Sammy Sosa and **Mark McGwire**.

CHAOS! COMICS
Rasslin' fans get a double slam of the WWF's **Undertaker** with October's *Undertaker #8* and the *Undertaker Halloween Special*.

EDDIE CAMPBELL COMICS
Eddie and famed writer **Alan Moore** will collect *From Hell*, the duo's Jack the Ripper magnum opus, in a 580-page "phone book" this November.

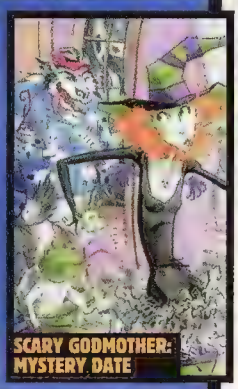
IMAGE COMICS
Comics' most powerful giant chicken—Powerhouse—plagues the Dragon in October's *Savage Dragon #68*. An **Erik Larsen** joint.

• **ARTIS STUDIOS**
Well, whaddya know? Avalon Studios—publisher of *Aria, Machina Rex* and the like—is now known as Artis Studios. Keen.

• **TOP COW COMICS**
Writers **Christina Z.** and **Scott Lobdell** collaborate on October's *Witchblade/Darkness Special*, a one-shot tying in to the massive Witchblade/Darkness crossover.

ONI PRESS
Whiteout: Melt #2 (of 4) hits in October, written by rising star **Greg Rucka** (upcoming: *Detective Comics*). Artist pal Steve Lieber hangs on for the ride, too.

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT
Scary Godmother: Mystery Date is the third kick-ass Halloween hardcover by writer/artist **Jill Thompson**. Look for it, quite naturally, in October.


SCARY GODMOTHER: MYSTERY DATE

SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS
Comics don't get any more real than *Potential*, the amazing diaries of real-life high-school student **Ariel Schrag**. Unit #6, *Ecology*, hits in October.

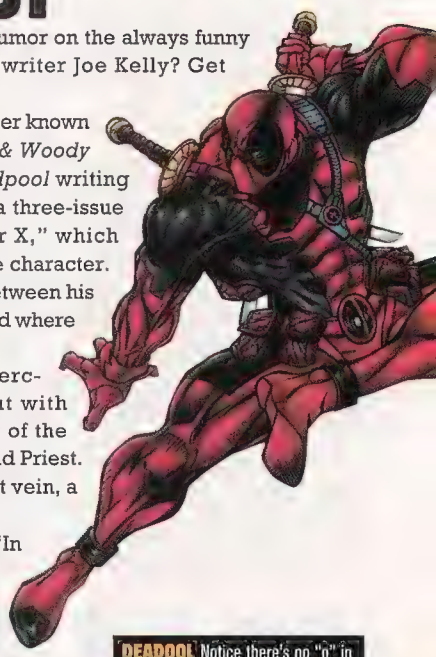
DEADPOOL BLESSED WITH PRIEST

How do you maintain a sense of humor on the always funny *Deadpool* when you're losing writer Joe Kelly? Get Christopher Priest, of course.

Starting with October's #34, the writer known for over-the-top humor on *Quantum & Woody* and *Black Panther* will take the *Deadpool* writing reins. Priest will start things off with a three-issue storyarc titled "Deadpool: Chapter X," which explores some unknown history of the character. "There's a lot of uncharted territory between his origins as the Weapon X experiment and where he is today," said Priest.

Readers can expect Marvel's merc-with-a-mouth to remain funny, but with Priest's special twist. "My handling of the series will differ vastly from Joe's," said Priest. "My sense of humor runs in a different vein, a little more cynical."

Should we expect any surprises? "In terms of the character himself, we don't have any immediate plans," said Priest. "He's not going to grow an extra arm or anything. Waitaminnit...that's not bad!" He's kidding, of course. ■ **RICHARD HO**


DEADOOL Notice there's no "p" in the pool. Let's keep it that way.

THUMBINGOFF

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

THUMBS UP

PUNISHER RETURNS Big-time applause gets aimed at Marvel Knights for targeting the dream team of Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon to fire their hyper-violent style into the Punisher next year. We anxiously await to tally the body count.

'CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS 2' The best writing Chris Claremont's done in years. Heroes like Psylocke and the Human Torch used their powers in interesting ways. And we're treated to the best Iron Man in a decade. Here's a Stark Solution: get Claremont on Iron Man, and we'd have a *real* champ on our hands.

THE NEW FLASH We might not've liked the story that led up to his first appearance, but this mysterious new Flash has got us juiced! (Wanna know who the suspects are? Race to page 24.)

THUMBS DOWN

'CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS 2' Yeah, we loved how Psylocke used her powers, but if she does, she'll free the evil Shadow King, dudes. (Remember *X-Men #78?*) We hope there's ramifications, guys.

'WILD TIMES' These five WildStorm one-shots took familiar WS books (like Gen^{13}) and tossed 'em into different time periods (like the 1960s) for no reason at all. If you're going to do a fifth-week event, make it count for something like DC's JSA books did.

'ASTRO CITY' Don't get us wrong—we love this book to death, but thanks to various delays, the current Steeljack story has run for well over a year with no end in sight. C'mon, guys—polish this off fast!

'WIZARD' FAN AWARD WINNERS!

The best of comics were toasted on July 16, 1999 at the Wizard World Chicago '99 convention when the sixth annual *Wizard* Fan Awards were handed out. Ballots inserted in copies of both *Wizard* #90 and comics from a number of publishers generated over 18,000 fan votes. When all was tallied up and the dust cleared, here's who picked up the hardware:

- **Favorite writer** Kurt Busiek
- **Favorite penciler** George Pérez
- **Favorite inker** Jimmy Palmiotti
- **Favorite painter** Alex Ross
- **Favorite colorist** Liquid Graphics
- **Favorite letterer** Richard Starkings and Comicraft
- **Favorite editor** Bob Harras
- **Favorite hero** Wolverine
- **Favorite heroine** Witchblade
- **Favorite villain** Sabretooth
- **Favorite supporting character** Commissioner Gordon
- **Favorite ongoing series** *Uncanny X-Men*
- **Favorite one-shot or mini-series** *Superman for All Seasons*
- **Favorite publisher** Marvel Comics
- **Favorite comic merchandise** Marvel Collector Editions: All-New, All-Different X-Men gift pack
- **Favorite comic TV or movie project** "Blade" movie
- **Comics' Greatest Moment—1998** X-Men reunited in new line-up, *Uncanny X-Men* #360 and *X-Men* #80

SUCKIN' FACE Kurt (right) and his boy George

Talk about being on a roll: Comicraft (letterer), Bob Harras (editor), *Uncanny X-Men* (ongoing) and Marvel Comics (publisher) have all won *Wizard* Fan Awards for three straight years. "We at Marvel are all very happy," said Harras, "because this came from the fans and that's what matters most." ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN**

PUPPET MASTER Nelson (left) probes Yoda, as stunned onlookers include (from left) Devin Grayson, Mark Waid, Amanda Conner and Erik Larsen.

PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

ONLY ONE MAN CAN KEEP THE SECRET SAFE.

FROM THE CREATORS OF MORE THAN MORTAL IN EARLY 2000.

image

THE KEEPER

GOING TO THE JOHN

With revamp mania running wild, the Marvel Universe feels the 'Byrne'

John Byrne can fix anything.

Or at least Marvel Comics thinks so.

Fresh off a revamp of Spidey's origin in *Spider-Man: Chapter One*, Byrne is slated to fill in Marvel history with his upcoming monthly *X-Men: The Hidden Years* and just-announced 12-issue mini-series, *Marvel: The Lost Heroes*. These days, if anything at Marvel involves a continuity overhaul, Byrne's the official go-to guy.

The writer/artist who refers to himself as "Mr. Fix-It" has experience at reinventing history. His *Man of Steel* mini-series rebooted Superman back in 1986, and Byrne would later tweak *Wonder Woman*. "I think the fan in me gets scared and I find myself thinking, 'If I don't do this revamp, someone else will and it'll turn out wrong.' That sounds like rampaging ego, of course," Byrne chuckled, "whereas I'm a modest, unassuming kind of guy."

Byrne developed his reputation on *Fantastic Four* in the early 1980s, modernizing the book without rebooting from scratch. But since 1986's total revamp on Superman, Byrne has

become a continuity bulldozer—plowing over the past and building new origins.

While Marvel turns to Byrne with complete confidence, fan reaction hasn't been as universally positive. *Chapter One* sold well, but was plagued by negative reviews. And after a mere seven issues as writer of *Hulk*, Byrne has been fired. Editor Tom Brevoort declined to comment on Byrne's dismissal. Part of Byrne's run? The *Hulk 1999* annual, which revamps Greenskin's origin. "John took it upon himself to fix what he thought was dated and/or illogical," said one Marvel source, speaking under condition of anonymity.

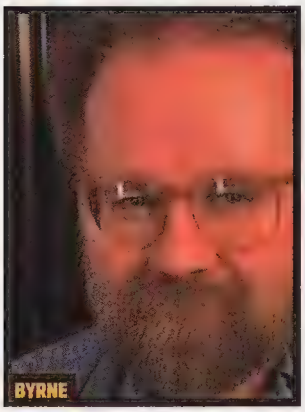


PHOTO BY MATTHEW J. ATANIAN

BYRNE

"There's a logo on the cover that says 'Chapter One.' It's there to draw attention to the fans who like this, and a warning to those who don't." Another source added that Marvel may completely ignore the annual's story, kind of undoing what Byrne undid.

Byrne avoided comment on any Hulk-related issues, and stated that contrary to popular belief, he doesn't think every book under the sun *needs* a fix. "But people like the big fix," he commented. "I've dubbed it the 'Man of Steel Syndrome,' where everybody who takes on a new book thinks they have to reboot it."

So why does Byrne keep doing it himself? "Well, every book needs some cleaning, and it's a marketing consideration," says Byrne. "Was *Man of Steel* necessary? No. Was *Chapter One* necessary? No. But they get noticed if you do them as an event."

Byrne's quick to point out that his two upcoming Marvel series aren't retellings at all. Rather, *X-Men: The Hidden Years* will take place between (*Uncanny*) *X-Men* #66 and #94, issues Marvel packed with reprints. *Lost Heroes* is intended to show just what went on in the Marvel Universe in the years between Captain America's last appearance and the debut of the Fantastic Four. "Along the way, characters like Thor and Namor and Doctor Strange show up," said Byrne. "We'll finally get to see what happened in this long gap between eras." Interestingly enough, Marvel did *not* turn to Byrne for this fall's *X-Men: Children of the Atom* mini-series, which retells the origin of Marvel's mutant team, instead tapping Joe Casey to write it.

Marvel has never had to completely reboot continuity the way DC did with 1985's *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, but that time may eventually come. Despite his belief that such an event *wouldn't* be a good idea, if Marvel asked him to play God, could Byrne fix all their continuity glitches? "Yes," said Byrne without hesitation.

BYRNE BABY BYRNE All the way from Chapter One to Chapter 11, Marvel has literally seen it all.

Another unnamed Marvel source agreed with Byrne—at least in the sense that it would be a bad idea. "*Chapter One* is the example. Among the staff, it's known that Lee and Ditko did Spider-Man's origin best. To try and improve on that was folly. To change things is insulting and disrespectful to the fans."

But, if Marvel does decide to change things, Byrne's ready for the call. "One thing we're doing in *Lost Heroes* is sowing the seeds that could fix literally everything. Roger [Stern, Byrne's *Lost Heroes* co-plotter] and I have come up with a principle for *Lost Heroes* that people can pick up and apply to *Fantastic Four* or *Hulk* and it will immediately get rid of all the anachronisms. Mr. Fix-It strikes again!" ■ **SCOTT BRICK & JIM McLAUCHLIN**

BYRNETREATMENT

JOHNNY GETS HIS GUN

He's done so many reboots that his name has become a verb. So how would John...uh, "Byrne" the following Marvel characters?

DOCTOR STRANGE "I'd take him back to being the name whispered in shadows, this mysterious guy that nobody's sure even exists. It'd also be cool if only people who needed Doc could even see his house. If the doorbell rings, Wong immediately knows there's somebody in trouble, because otherwise the bell wouldn't be ringing."

THOR "He needs to be played more superhero-ish, with more of an Earth connection. [Former Marvel Editor-in-Chief] Len Wein always said, 'Do all the Asgardian stories you want, but every once in a while he's got to come back and take his lumps from the Absorbing Man.' If Thor's off on an Odin Quest all the time, who cares?"

FANTASTIC FOUR "This is one I'd really love to do, and we're sowing the seeds for it in *Lost Heroes*. I mean, what the hell were Johnny and Sue doing on that rocket? I have a reason they were there, and a reason Reed was so keen to get into space to begin with."

DEVIL DINOSAUR "I've always thought this series would be a real hoot, since it's just so over the top. It's the closest thing Marvel has to my secret dream project: Alley Oop, a time-traveling caveman with dinosaurs. What more could anyone ask?" ■ **SB**

DEVIL MAY CARE Let's hope so, 'cause no one else would.

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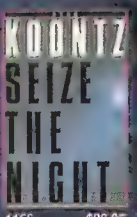

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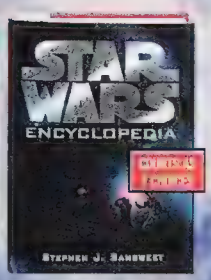

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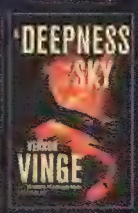

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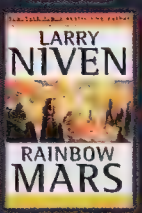

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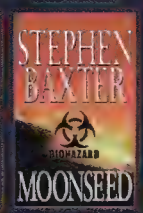

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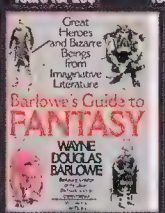

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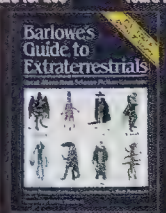

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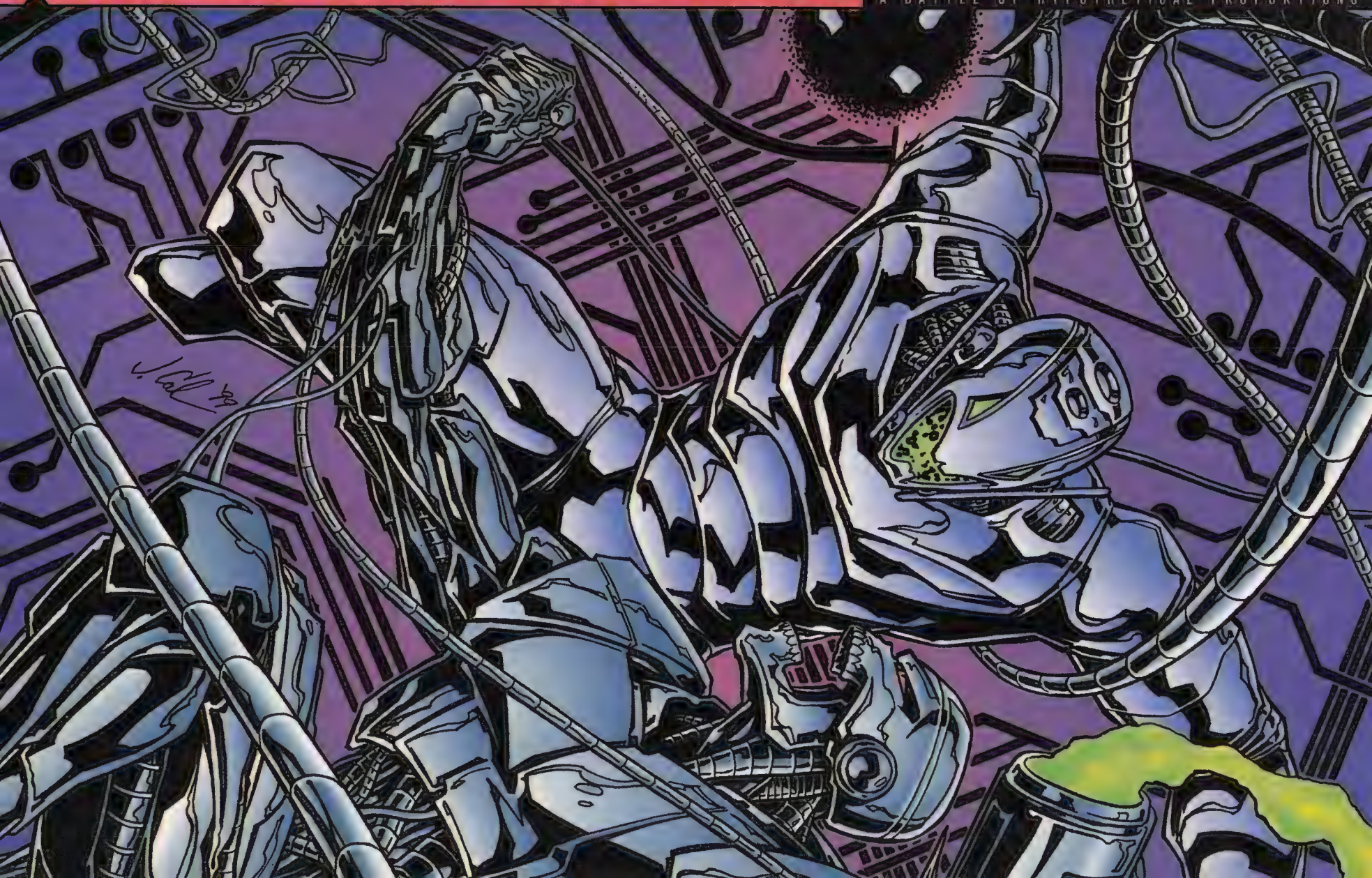


LAST MAN STANDING

comic battles you never thought you'd see

ULTRON VS. METALLO

THE COMBATANTS

TALE OF THE TAPE

6'	HEIGHT	6'5"
535 lbs.	WEIGHT	600 lbs.
72"	REACH	77"
IRON MAIDEN	FAVORITE BAND	METALLICA
AC	POWER SUPPLY	DC (HAH!)

Using technology from the android Dragon Man, Dr. Henry Pym (Giant-Man) created Ultron-1. However, his android achieved a high self-awareness and improved its body, resulting in over a dozen Ultron incarnations. With an adamantium shell, Ultron strives to destroy his father, the Avengers and all organic matter on Earth.

Following a tragic car crash, John Corben found his brain transplanted into a mighty metallic body powered by Kryptonite. Known as Metallo, Corben became a machine of pure destruction, upgrading his body several times, and continuing to threaten innocents as the *real* man of steel.

the battle... After trashing the Midtown Metropolis Bank, Metallo runs smack into one of Ultron's killing sprees. Lunging at Ultron, Metallo slams the Avengers' foe clear across town. But before Metallo can even pick up his loot, Ultron's back with a bigger mad-on. Confused why a fellow android isn't annihilating flesh walkers, he pounds Metallo with concussion blasters. Calling Ultron a computerized nut job, Metallo attempts to take control of Ultron's body, but his adamantium shell proves tricky. Realizing that Metallo's body houses a human brain, Ultron is utterly revolted at this mockery of everything he's fighting for. With a quick blast from his encephalo beam, he commands Metallo to collapse. Confused, Metallo momentarily drops his guard, just long enough for Ultron to pound the metal-head into so much scrap heap.

the winnah...Ultron

this month's battle drawn by JIM CALAFIORE

FIRSTLOOK

JLA: EARTH II

Grant Morrison spins the JLA into an all-new world where it doesn't pay to be good

Superman's a twisted sociopath, Wonder Woman's a slut and Flash is a drug addict. Just life as usual on Earth II...

In *JLA: Earth II*, a 96-page, hardcover one-shot written by Grant Morrison (*JLA*) and illustrated by Frank Quitely (*The Kingdom: Offspring*), evil reigns supreme and good is a silly concept. When the JLA travels there to meet its corrupt counterpart, the Crime Syndicate, the only superhero around to help them is a guy named Lex Luthor!

"Evil always wins on Earth II," says Morrison. That means it's going to be pretty tough for the JLA to win—maybe even impossible. "The story is actually about the JLA's greatest failure, and how they have to fail in order to save their universe," says Morrison mysteriously. "We'll leave it at that."

The JLA lineup in *Earth II* will consist of the Big Seven, most of whom meet up with some pretty twisted counterparts—like Ultraman, Superwoman, Power Ring, Johnny Quick, and Batman's counterpart, Owlman. "Owlman is Thomas Wayne, the older Wayne brother, who watched his brother and mother get killed," says Morrison. "Now his father is Commissioner Wayne of Gotham City, and his son Owlman hates him for allowing the mother to die and fights against him constantly as an evil criminal. We've reversed everything, so these guys are all just sitting around drinking all the time, fighting with each other and doing terrible things. They're sleazy, as well. Just real bastards, basically."

JLA: Earth II is actually a tip of the hat to the old DC continuity which consisted of multiple Earths, such as Earth-3, where the villainous Crime Syndicate hung out before DC wiped out their multiple Earths in 1985-86's *Crisis on Infinite Earths*. Morrison maintains that *Earth II* is more an homage to the old story line, however, rather than a return to pre-*Crisis* continuity.

"It's not an Elseworlds tale, it's really just a story that stands alone," says Morrison. "If people want to try and fit it into continuity, I'm sure there's somebody clever enough to do that. What I'm asking fans to do is imagine this was the JLA movie; it's what I would have done if somebody asked me to do the script. It doesn't really tie into continuity, but it is kind of their ultimate adventure."

Los Angeles-based writer Scott Brick has an evil Doppelgänger who eats eggs with lots of ketchup. There oughtta be a law...

BY SCOTT BRICK

CRISIS SCHMISIS In *Earth II*, Lex Luthor (above) is Earth's sole hero. The villains? Evil versions of JLAers like (opposite from left) Superwoman, Ultraman and Owlman. Maybe the Squadron Supreme can cameo, too.

TAKETWO

THE DILLY-O

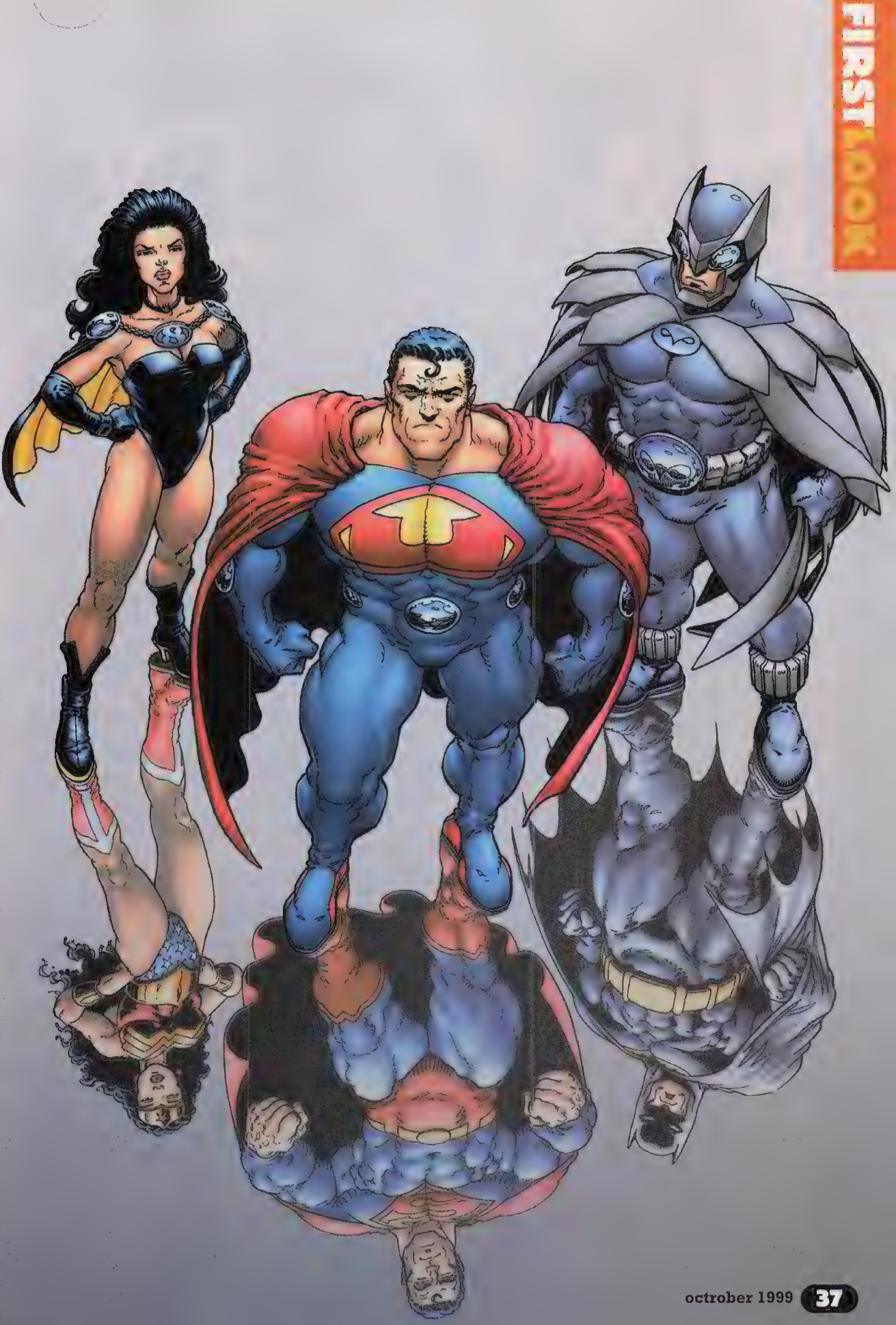
It's *JLA: Earth II*, where current *JLA* writer Grant Morrison pits the seven core members against evil versions of themselves in an alternate reality. Their only ally? Lex Luthor.

WHY YOU CARE

Because Morrison's *JLA* sizzles as DC's best-selling book. And, for a guy who's spun several memorable JLA tales, Morrison's calling *Earth II* the team's "ultimate adventure."

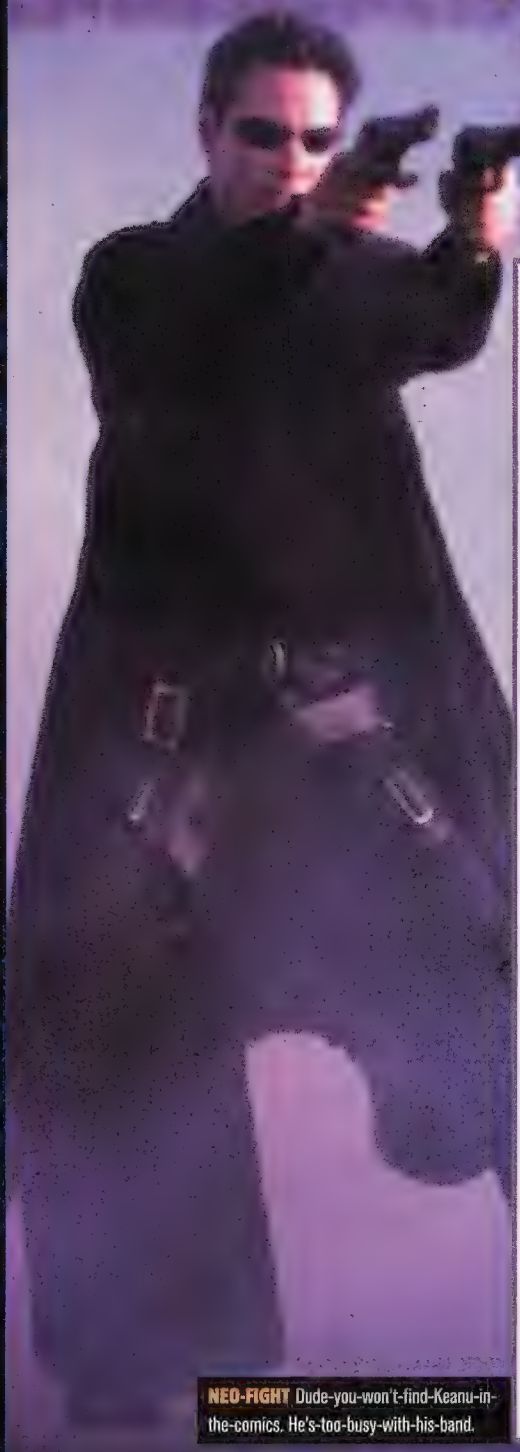
DID YOU KNOW?

"The president of the United States is Jeffrey Dahmer," Morrison says of the world of *Earth II*, where everything's the opposite of what you expect and evil always wins.



INTO THE MATRIX

Want the next best thing to a 'Matrix' sequel? Read the official comic books on the Web.
By Scott Brick



NEO-FIGHT Dude-you-won't-find-Keanu-in-the-comics. He's-too-busy-with-his-band.

PHOTO COURTESY OF EVERETT COLLECTION

THE MATRIX WANTS YOU.

It wants you to know that the story started in "The Matrix"—last summer's blockbuster sci-fi film starring Keanu Reeves—did not end with the final credits. But you won't find the ongoing stories at your local multiplex, at any Blockbuster video store or even at your local Waldenbooks.

You'll find them as comic book stories on the World Wide Web.

Posted at the film's official Web site (www.whatisthematrix.com), these fully authorized, brand-new Matrix stories feature some of comics' biggest names all boldly going into the brave new world of cyber-comics.

"Considering the film itself is so much about technology, it seemed natural to do these stories on the Net," says Spencer Lamm, series editor and Webmaster. "Once we had that idea, there was no going back, it made so much sense. Now we're creating something that hasn't been done before—an interface between comics and technology."

It makes sense. After all, the film's set in a future world where machines rule the Earth, powered by electricity housed within humanity's brain and nervous system. To keep humanity impotent—and unaware of its electronic captors—the machines keep everyone in a virtual reality called the Matrix, which simulates normal, everyday life. These new comics mostly tell slices of "life" inside the Matrix.

Ten new Matrix tales have appeared on the site so far, with more on the way; each story stays online indefinitely, eliminating the need to scour back-issue bins for previous "issues." The tales are also the next-best-thing to a sequel, being firmly grounded in official "Matrix" continuity (although there are two more "Matrix" flicks to be filmed within the next few years, starring Reeves). Among the contributors are award-winning writer Neil Gaiman (*Sandman*), bad-girl artist Adam Hughes, Paul Chadwick (*Concrete*), *Gambit* penciler Steve Skroce (who contributed nearly 600 storyboards for the film) and *Hard Boiled* artist Geof Darrow (who served as the film's conceptual designer).

Even Larry and Andy Wachowski, who wrote and directed the film, wrote a comic story, illustrated by Darrow. "Theirs is a great example of where comics are going," says Lamm of the Wachowski Brothers' story, illustrated by Darrow. The Wachowski's story, which plants the seeds for the machines' eventual takeover, mixes prose with comics; through newspaper articles, trial transcripts, and a comic book flashback, readers can dissect how an artificially intelligent android stands trial for murder.

"John Gaeta's story actually takes place in the Fetus Fields, where the infants are grown in the film," says Lamm. "John doesn't come from the world of comics, he's the guy who was in charge of all the computer-gen-

AIEEEE!!! Sucks to be these guys, don't it?

erated images in the film. We're using people from all fields, people who can add something to this new part of the comic book industry."

Ultimately, Lamm strives to create a cybernetic entertainment experience that will one day rival the movie's. "The stories we have up on the site now are really only the beginning," says Lamm, who says future plans may include a trade paperback collection. "We're using industry leaders to really stretch the boundaries, to do something that hasn't been done before. And the best part is, it's all free. Free! Long live the Web!"

If Los Angeles-based writer Scott Brick's life is all a machine-created sham, then he wants to negotiate a new one.

ELECTRIC BOOGALOO Now we know what *really* happened to Walt Disney.

Standing Online

There're a ton of cyber-comics out there and there's something for everyone online. Find out where by checking www.icomics.com. Or to make it even easier, track down these sites:

MARVEL MANIA

(www.marvel.com) Marvel's most popular characters appear weekly in online escapades. Best of all, big-name talent does 'em, including Kevin Smith writing Daredevil and Joe Kelly writing Spider-Man.

WHIRLGIRL

(www.showtimeonline.com) Garbed in groovy go-go boots, this twentysomething superheroine fights high-tech tyrants and protects underground freedom fighters in her weekly adventures.

G.I.R.L. PATROL

(www.actionplanet.com/gp/girlpatrol.html) In the year 3790, Earth's protected by badasses with boobs. But if you get in the way of Captain Vreena and her crew in this weekly comic, they'll kick yo' ass.

JONNI NITRO, G-WOMAN

(www.jonninitro.com) Think James Bond as played by Catherine Zeta-Jones. Jonni's a secret agent, on the lam from GRIFFIN agents, and her weekly installments feature so many cool graphics and sound effects that they're almost like an animated film.

JOURNEYMEN

(www.zoomnet.net/~sreed/chronicles.htm) This adventure saga ain't typical sword-and-sorcery stuff. Everyone assumes this band of legendary warriors are heroes, but their chronicler shows them for the liars, cowards and greedy fools they really are. Updated weekly.

MELONPOOL

(www.melonpool.com) What do you get when you mix four aliens, a telepathic dog and a 5-foot hamster, trying to blend in on Earth? Uhh, you gotta see this to believe it. ■ **SB**

COUNTDOWN TO
WIZARD
2000
DILLON '99

TAKING AIM

GARTH ENNIS and STEVE DILLON's 'Punisher' marks the major moves of Marvel Knights' second year

Knight falls again.

For Marvel Knights, last year's editorial experiment that saw artists Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti revive low-rent Marvel titles into vital franchises, the future looks brighter than ever. Now that Marvel's renewed the duo's contract for another year, Marvel Knights' sophomore year promises to make fanboys go nuts. Not only will filmmaker Kevin Smith return to the pages of DAREDEVIL, but hot DC creators Grant Morrison, Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon also get Knighted.

"We're the luckiest bastards on the face of the planet," crows Palmiotti in his Noo Yawk accent. "Look at the names! We've got the absolute cream of the crop out there, and they all want to work with us. Lucky bastards."

Not as fortunate as also-ran titles like DAREDEVIL, PUNISHER, BLACK WIDOW and INHUMANS, which became instant buzz books since the Knights took over a year ago. The pair prepared for Year Two by keeping DAREDEVIL and PUNISHER, and adding a few mini-series along the way. Funny thing is, the industry's heavy hitters wanted to jump on board, too.

By Scott Brick

Locked and loaded on PUNISHER are PREACHER's Ennis and Dillon, who take a shot at Marvel's pre-eminent vigilante. Smith returns to DAREDEVIL after an arc by "Back to the Future" and BATMAN: NO MAN'S LAND scribe Bob Gale (who will also write an Ant-Man holiday one-shot). JLA writer Morrison and hot newcomer J.G. Jones (BLACK WIDOW) create a brand-new character. INHUMANS creators Paul Jenkins and Jae Lee reteam on an as-yet-untitled mini-series starring all of Marvel's heavy hitters. Devin Grayson returns for another BLACK WIDOW mini-series, joined by co-writer Greg Rucka (hot off of his "No Man's Land" stories in DC's Batman books).

"The only person we're missing is Stan Lee," says Palmiotti, "and we're still trying."

With a year of work under their belts, Quesada and Palmiotti strive to do new things. The only thing they're still trying to do? "Full-frontal nudity," says Quesada.

"They never let us do that last year," adds Palmiotti, "but we'll keep trying."

PUNISHER

Who says you can't always get what you want?

After years of overexposure, a flopped series and a failed makeover, Punisher's about to get a shot in the arm. Actually, he'll be holding the gun, with creators Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon on board for a 12-issue mini-series kicking off in 2000.

"This really is the dream team for this book," says Quesada of the duo responsible for Vertigo/DC's ultraviolent *Preacher*. "If you've followed these guys' work at all then you know what makes them great. Believe me when I say it's going to be everything the fans could ever hope for."

And when it comes to Marvel's premier gun-toting vigilante, fans wanna see dead bad guys. Ennis, who's still getting a bead on the basic plot, aims to please. "My plan is to take him as far back to his roots as possible, with no magic, no mysticism, no angels," he says, referring to last year's revamp of the character. "You're talking about crime stories set in the Marvel Universe. You're talking about a hard, cold, vicious sonuva bitch slaughtering people. It's not exactly brain surgery, y'know?" he says, laughing.

Dillon, who will pencil the series with Palmiotti inking, can't wait to take aim himself. "It's a character I've always had a bit of a feel for myself, so it's nice to get the chance."

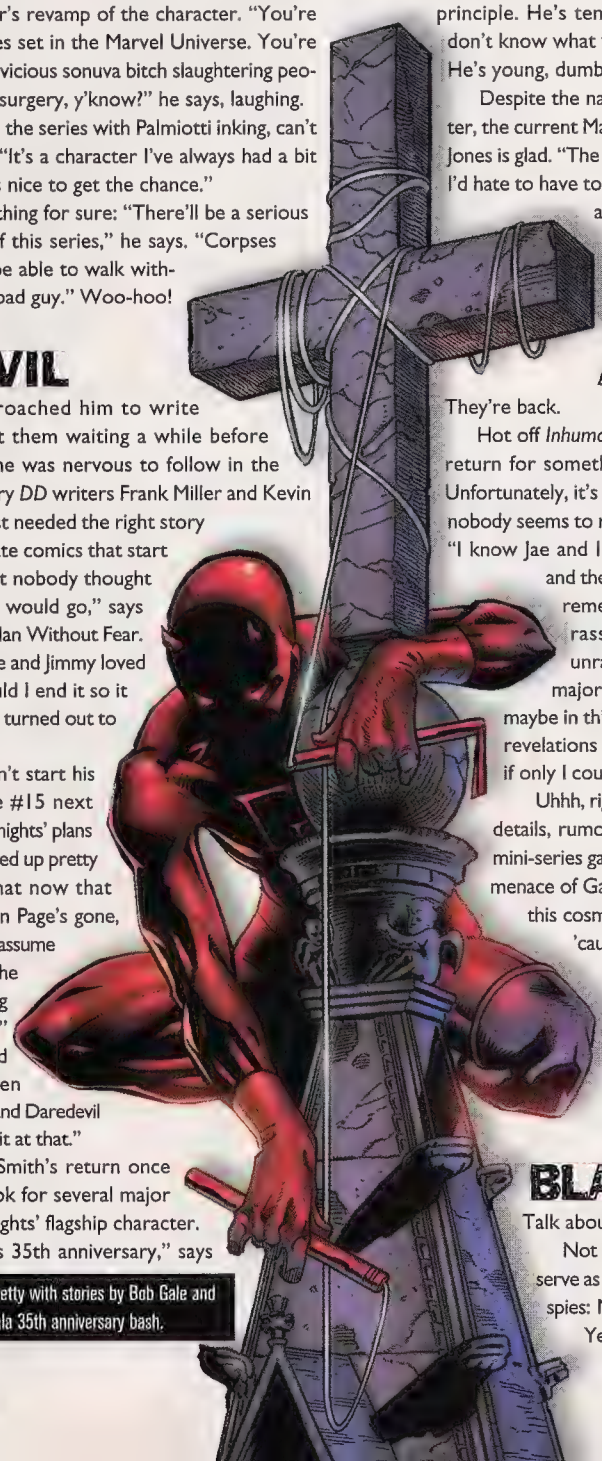
Palmiotti knows one thing for sure: "There'll be a serious body count by the end of this series," he says. "Corpses everywhere. You won't be able to walk without tripping over a dead bad guy." Woo-hoo!

DAREDEVIL

When the Knights approached him to write *Daredevil*, Bob Gale kept them waiting a while before accepting. Not because he was nervous to follow in the footsteps of now-legendary *DD* writers Frank Miller and Kevin Smith or anything—he just needed the right story to make him say yes. "I hate comics that start off with brilliant ideas, but nobody thought ahead to see where they would go," says Gale, a lifelong fan of the Man Without Fear. "My concept was great, Joe and Jimmy loved it, but was it a story? Could I end it so it was satisfying? The answer turned out to be yes, so I'm on board."

Given that Gale doesn't start his four-issue arc until issue #15 next spring, Quesada says the Knights' plans for Gale's storyarc are locked up pretty tightly. "Let's just say that now that [deceased girlfriend] Karen Page's gone, someone's going to have to assume the most dangerous job in the Marvel Universe—being Matt Murdock's girlfriend," laughs Quesada. "And there'll be several women vying for that position. Oh, and Daredevil gets sued. We'll just leave it at that."

In addition to Kevin Smith's return once Gale's tenure is done, look for several major projects featuring the Knights' flagship character. "Next year is Daredevil's 35th anniversary," says Quesada, who promises lots of Daredevil-related specials and mini-series by big-name creators. "We're celebrating with all the bells and whistles. It'll be more of the same Marvel Knights madness."



DARE HIM Daredevil's sittin' pretty with stories by Bob Gale and Kevin Smith, not to mention a gala 35th anniversary bash.

MARVEL BOY

Grant Morrison strives to do the impossible.

He made hokey villains look awesome in DC's *JLA*, pumped up third-string DC heroes in *Doom Patrol* and *Animal Man*, and now the writer turns to a Marvel character with the cornball name of Marvel Boy.

"The name is a tip of the hat to Bill Everett, who created the first Marvel Boy [during the 1940s], but it's Grant's attempt at finally creating an angst-ridden, Marvel hero for the next millennium," says Quesada. "Grant's Marvel Boy is a guy who walks in the gray area between good and evil, sort of constructed on the Sub-Mariner principle. He's temperamental, very moody and you just don't know what you're going to get when you meet him. He's young, dumb and full of spunk."

Despite the name paying homage to a previous character, the current Marvel Boy's an original, and for his part J.G. Jones is glad. "The first character had a really lame outfit and I'd hate to have to draw that," says Jones, laughing. "He had a headband, bracelets. Yikes! Instead, I'll be doing some all-new designs, some pretty exciting stuff."

PROJECT: ALZHEIMER'S

They're back.

Hot off *Inhumans*, writer Paul Jenkins and artist Jae Lee return for something completely different and complex. Unfortunately, it's so completely different and complex that nobody seems to remember quite what it is at the moment. "I know Jae and I presented something to Joe and Jimmy and the series is a go, but for the life of me, I can't remember what it was," says Jenkins, embarrassed. "I think the series is a constantly unraveling mystery that examines the role of major Marvel characters in the Universe. And maybe in this examination, we uncover many startling revelations about these long-beloved characters. But if only I could remember more..."

Uhhh, right. Well, since nobody can recall any more details, rumor has it that this yet-untitled seven-issue mini-series gathers the entire Marvel Universe to stop a menace of Galactus-scale proportions. But dealing with this cosmic creature must affect Marvel's memory, 'cause everyone pulls a "duh, I forgot" schtick.

"This series is gonna rock the *very foundation* of the Marvel Universe," says Quesada enthusiastically. "But for some reason I can't remember what the project is."

Whatever.

BLACK WIDOW

Talk about doubling your pleasure.

Not only does the new *Black Widow* mini-series serve as a sequel, but it will also star two sexy super-spies: Natasha Romanov, the classic Widow, and Yelena, the fellow Russian vying to replace her.

WhirlGirl
Sometimes a girl's gotta whirl
SHO.com
New episodes every Friday*
*She's happiest with her heel in some DRONE'S EYE SOCKET.
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DC KNIGHTS

What if Quesada and Palmiotti bolted Marvel for DC? After changing their name to the Dark Knights, they'd make some pretty big changes on some pretty well-known titles.

SUPERMAN

Jimmy: You can't kill Superman, so I'd have all the villains drive him insane. Kidnap Lois, go for his brain and drive him to the brink of insanity.

BATMAN

Jimmy: Gay.
Joe: Robin comes out of the closet, too. Batman and the Joker get a place together.

WONDER WOMAN

Joe: Girl-on-girl action.
Jimmy: Let's dig deep into what goes on on Amazon Island, you know what I'm saying?

GREEN LANTERN

Jimmy: I'd make it Green Flashlight, or Green Laser, because who uses a lantern anymore? C'mon, lanterns went out with Ichabod Crane. I also think red is a cooler color, anyway. Red Laser, that'd be good.

MARTIAN MANHUNTER

Jimmy: Have him hunt Martians.
Joe: No, he's a *man*-hunter. He'd hunt men.
Jimmy: What, he's outta the closet?

PLASTIC MAN

Jimmy: There's money in plastics, so we'd do that book.
Joe: I think he needs to be in the porn biz. Think about it.

ANGEL AND THE APE

Jimmy: Get rid of the ape. Just Angel. I don't understand it, a babe like Angel with an ape? What is that? That's like getting back at your parents.

ELSEWORLDS

Jimmy: Superman's ship lands in the ocean, and he grows up underwater. One day, the Titanic hits the bottom of the ocean, and he gets an appetite for eating dead human flesh. He hungers for more and comes up in Japan. You don't realize until the end of the story, but he's actually the size of a skyscraper. Walking down the streets of Japan, eating people and knocking over buildings.
Joe: There's potential there.
Jimmy: [DC Executive Editor] Mike Carlin didn't think so. He called security on me.
■ SB

Although the series is in its earliest plotting stages, returning writer Devin Grayson can't wait to take another crack at the rival Russians. "Theirs is a nice relationship, and it came off exactly as I wanted it," she says. "You see the hint of a maternal edge, as well. I think it's a nice, complicated, juicy relationship."

Crime novelist Greg Rucka, currently making waves in Batman's "No Man's Land" storyline, joins Grayson on the series. He hints that Yelena will continue on her quest to get closer to the original Black Widow, perhaps using Natasha's old flame Matt Murdock (a.k.a. Daredevil) as a conduit. "We'll pursue the mind-game angle from the first series and run with it," says Rucka. "It will have kicking and punching and shouting and shooting and maybe even the occasional explosion, but we're planning on having some serious intellectual thrills going on as well.

"Natasha's strong, capable, smart, and on top of that has red hair and looks really good wearing a black jumpsuit," says Rucka. "She's a character, not a caricature."

ANT-MAN: BIG CHRISTMAS

Marvel Knights: Year Two kicks off in December with the smallest of holiday gifts. But in this case, size does matter.

The Knights spread holiday cheer with the *Ant-Man: Big Christmas* one-shot, starring shrinking Avengers Hank Pym and his ex-wife, the Wasp. "This is a weird kind of Christmas book," says writer Bob Gale with a chuckle, who teams with artist Phil Winslade. "It's a little perverse in that the theme is almost anti-Christmas. Talk to people about Christmas and the conversation always turns out to be about dissing your relatives, you know? There you are, stuck with a bunch of people you don't really want to be with, and that's the situation in the book."

Here, Ant-Man and the Wasp answer a letter to the Avengers with a Christmas wish. "This kid wishes that Ant-Man and the Wasp would show up at his house for Christmas because he can't stand being with his relatives," says Gale. "They decide that, instead of spending Christmas with one of their own dysfunctional families, they'll spend it with the dysfunctional family of a perfect stranger."

Not a flashback story, Gale says, "Hank decides to once again take up the mantle of Ant-Man, and for those fans out there who always enjoyed Hank in that guise, I can honestly say they're going to have a hell of a good time with this book."

Los Angeles-based writer Scott Brick likes baking cookies with three times the sugar. (Additional reporting by Jim McLauchlin.)

BLACK LEATHER Even when she's taking a bullet, Natasha's lookin' migh-ty *fine*.

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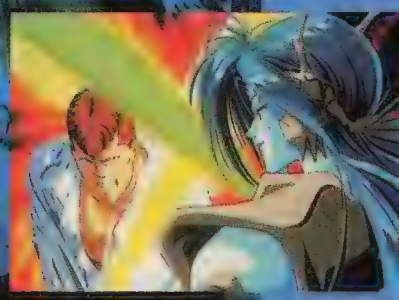

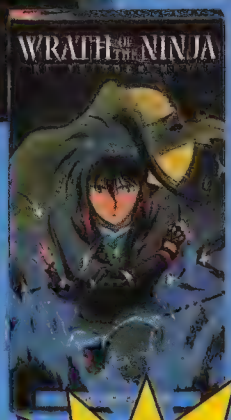

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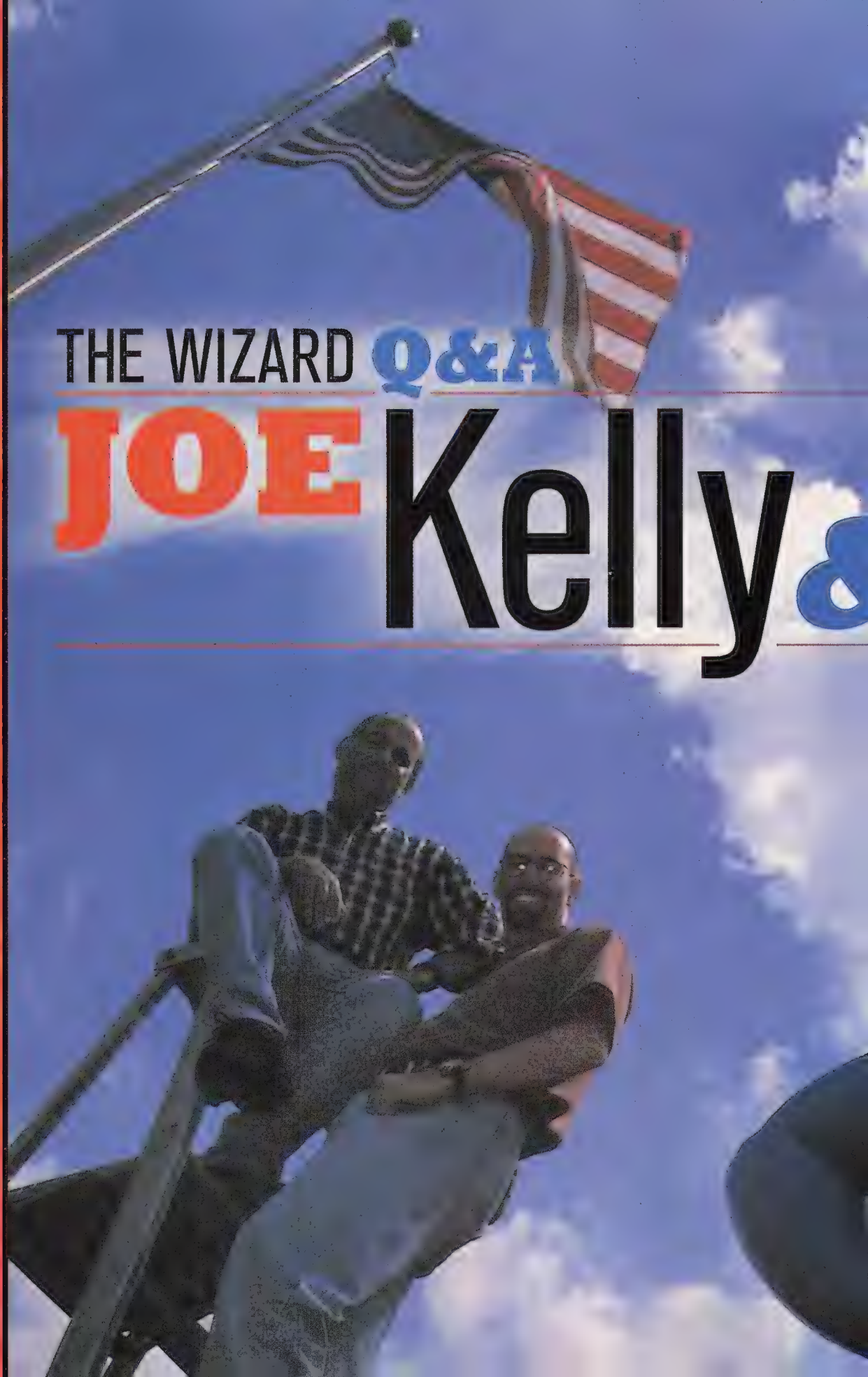
THE WIZARD Q&A
JOE Kelly

JEPH Loeb

New Superman writers JOE KELLY and JEPH LOEB fly to Metropolis to revive the Man of Steel... and maybe Krypto too

BY JIM McLAUCHLIN • PHOTOS BY BRIAN D. TIRPAK

Metropolis, Ill. ain't exactly a "metropolis." You'd need to be Superman to fly straight there.

Mere mortals use the nearby Paducah, Ky. airport to drive to Metropolis, the town that's become the unofficial home of Superman with its comic book name, giant Superman statue, memorabilia-filled Super-Museum, and annual parade. Today, at *Wizard*'s request, new Superman writers Jeph Loeb and Joe Kelly fly into this appropriate setting to discuss how they can revive the Man of Steel from what many feel is his second death. Come October, the duo must save the last son of Krypton not from Lex Luthor or Brainiac, but from the character's lowest sales ever.

"There's something wrong when the most recognizable comic book character in the world does not reach an audience it could or should," says Loeb. "There's a certain responsibility of moving that up. If Superman's cool and hip, more people are reading Superman because he's the most accessible character out there."

But Loeb has a more immediate concern on his hands. He doesn't much like flying, and swallows hard as he sits on the Paducah-bound airplane, pulling at the "lucky tie" he always wears when he flies. Kelly plops into his seat, carrying bags under his eyes that scream "I just pulled an all-nighter catching up on deadlines."

But the mood changes just after takeoff. Sitting across the aisle from each other, the pair reach into duffel bags and grab black-and-white copies of their first Superman issues—Loeb's *Superman* #151 and Kelly's *Action Comics* #760. With little-kid grins, they swap and read each other's books. Within minutes, Loeb—who landed the Super-job with his work on last year's hit mini-series *Superman For All Seasons*—

slaps his knee and stomps the floor, howling with laughter at Kelly's book. Kelly—who got tagged for *Action* when Loeb recommended him to DC Comics—sits in awe of *Superman* #151. "That's power, man," Kelly says, suddenly refreshed. "That's what a Superman story should be."

Loeb feels the same way upon reaching the hotel. He whips out a cell phone and checks messages. "Five people want me to call them, then hang up so they can call right back," he laughs. "They just want to see 'Metropolis' on their phone bill."

Loeb and Kelly just want to see Metropolis, period. After a day of sightseeing and marveling at the biggest hunk of Kryptonite ever, the two writers settle down with some drinks—for Kelly, a Jim Beam and Coke, with Loeb opting for just a Coke—and talk about shaping their Metropolis and the biggest hero comics has ever seen.

WIZARD: We're all familiar with the phrase, "This is a job for Superman." What makes this a job for Joe Kelly?

KELLY: I think I'm on *Action* to throw a bit of humor and absurdity in, to bounce weird ideas off of this very classic Superman concept and see what evolves out of that. To have an opportunity to contribute to this history in my own voice—which is definitely something that I've been asked to do—is a real honor. Obviously, Superman's been around for a thousand years, and he'll be around a thousand more. Superman will always be here.

WIZARD: So you can't screw it up.

KELLY: [*Laughing*] Oh, I can! But I'll just be a blip on the radar. For my little blip, I think that DC just wanted somebody who had a skewed perspective and weird storytelling takes.

WIZARD: Why is this a job for Jeph Loeb?

LOEB: A large part of my being here has to do with [1998's acclaimed mini-series] *Superman For All Seasons*, which for whatever reason caught the imagination and the emotion of what Superman is. I think Eddie B. [Superman Group Editor Eddie Berganza] asked me aboard to bring my version of heart to the book. I wanted to go back to the things that I remember and care about. And that's the relationships between the principal people—Clark, Lois, Jimmy Olsen, Perry White, Luthor...

KELLY: ...and Krypto!

LOEB: ...and then back in Smallville with Ma and Pa Kent. I think I'm just telling stories that people have wanted to see for a long time.

WIZARD: [To both] Readers know you. They generally like you. You've probably got your choice of assignments. Why Superman?

KELLY: Say to your parents, "I write comic books," and they think, "Oh, great. You should be going to Apex Tech to learn a trade." But when you say, "I work on Superman," their eyes light up. Everybody in the world knows Superman. Everybody.

LOEB: I talked to a friend of mine who doesn't read comics, and when I said I was going to write Superman, his response was, "You mean the guy on the stamp?" I hadn't thought about it, but yeah—he's on a postage stamp. He's an icon of huge size.

WIZARD: Who is Superman to you guys?

LOEB: For me, he's Clark. And Clark is a young man raised in Smallville by two really remarkable people. Out of that grew this kid who wound up with more power than anybody you've ever seen, and used the powers for good because that's what Ma and Pa Kent taught him. To me, he'll always be Clark.

KELLY: For me, I think of him as a young guy who's just starting out in life who has the potential to do great things. And unlike the normal shmoe on the street, he has a little extra responsibility because he can punch through steel and things like that. When I sit down and write him, that's how I approach him.

WIZARD: What's your book going to be? What kind of stories?

LOEB: Mine is the classic core characters interacting with each

VITAL STATS

NAME: Joseph (Jeph) Loeb III (on left)
OCCUPATION: Writer of *Superman, The Coven* and *The Witching Hour*
BORN: January 29, 1958 in Stamford, Conn.
FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE: Sherman Oaks, Calif.
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Loeb shot to the top with collaborations with artist Tim Sale, including four previous Batman "Halloween" projects spanning 1993 to '97 plus 1998's *Superman For All Seasons* mini-series; helped form Awesome Entertainment in 1998 with artist Rob Liefeld and remains as a vice president; has screenwriter and producer credits on such films as "Teen Wolf," "Commando" and "Firestorm."
SPENT AT SUPER MUSEUM GIFT SHOP: $173.86, including a Superman pen knife and six Superman spoons. "I wanted to buy the bra ['Supergirl' actress] Helen Slater wore in 'Supergirl,' but they wouldn't sell it."

NAME: Joseph Paul Kelly (on right)
OCCUPATION: Writer of *Action Comics, Machina Rex, Steampunk*
BORN: September 1, 1971 in New York, N.Y.
FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE: Long Island, N.Y.
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Barely out of college, Kelly wowed fans in 1997 with his light, humorous style on Marvel's ongoing *Deadpool*; parlayed his initial success into a 1997-98 run on *X-Men*, lasting from #70 through #85; became a recent addition to DC's Cliffhanger imprint writing *SteamPunk*, set to debut in January.
SPENT AT SUPER MUSEUM GIFT SHOP: About $25, including Kryptonite Super-Hot Sauce and an official Metropolis baseball cap. "I would have spent more, but 'Inflatable Lois' didn't look real enough."

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other, and the classic villains funneled through [penciler] Ed McGuinness' brain, which means that they're gonna come out cool and hip in a way that people haven't seen before. The other thing is I'm giving Superman more gigantic physical challenges so that he's in real jeopardy. If he's gonna go against Mongul, there's an awfully good chance he's gonna be killed.

WIZARD: How are you going to amp up the villains?

LOEB: Almost all the villains will have an unexpected motivation that we haven't seen before, and that motivation will make them more deadly. The villains don't all necessarily have to be changed. They just need to be made darker. Darth Vader is a great villain not because of anything particular he does, but just because—man!—he's just so evil!

The last time that I really remember Superman getting the snot knocked outta him was with Doomsday five years ago. That's what we want to do. We want villains so that you know when Superman gets hit, he's gonna get knocked out of Metropolis and bump into the JLA Watchtower on the moon.

WIZARD: And *Action Comics*, Joe?

KELLY: The tenor of *Action* is action. It's sexy. It's fun. It's wild. Superman makes mistakes sometimes, but always has a great time doing it.

For me, the key will be Superman's relationship with Lois. As far as I'm concerned, they've only been married, like, a year. They're a young, happy couple.

LOEB: I think both of us are working really hard to bring a love-story aspect. Lois will narrate every episode of my book. Her voice and the way she sees Superman is important. Sometimes she thinks he's the biggest dope in the world and is more than willing to point it out. But she really loves the guy. They're still newlyweds. There's passion there.

KELLY: [*In bad "Austin Powers"-speak*] Yeah! He'll throw her the shag of steel, baby!

WIZARD: I'm looking for a one-word answer. The Superman books today: Do they rock or suck?

LOEB: [*Getting up from his chair*] I gotta leave the room.

KELLY: [*Looking puzzled*] I can tell you honestly that I haven't read a lot recently. When Eddie told me to come on the books, I asked if he wanted me to do a lot of research and stuff. He told me to approach it with whatever I already knew coming in. I kind of kept to that.

WIZARD: That wasn't a one-word answer.

KELLY: I know. I just can't do it.

WIZARD: Are the Super-books in trouble today?

KELLY: It's difficult as part of a team to talk about that sort of stuff. I think that changes need to be made and they're being made. I don't think that I can knowledgeably comment on that because I really haven't read it. Maybe that says something, but I haven't read that many.

[*After several minutes, Loeb re-enters the room*]

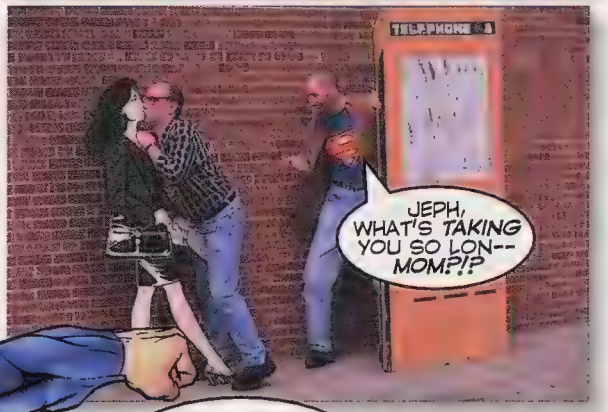
WIZARD: Jeph, do they rock or suck?

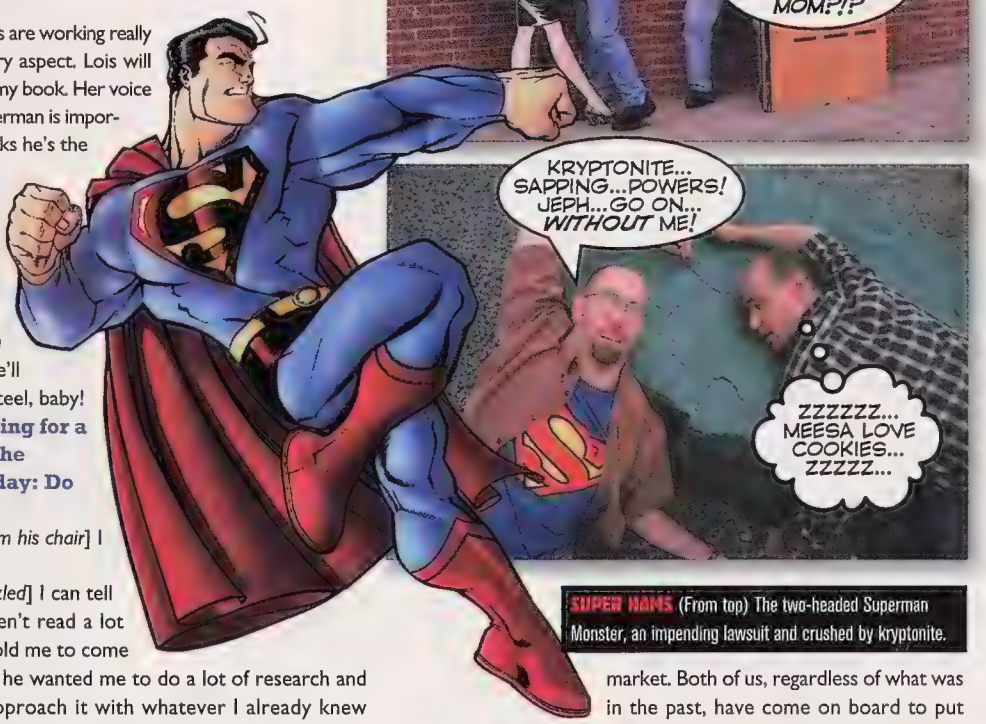
LOEB: [*Pauses*] You're asking us to judge the work of people that have been working really hard. Clearly we were brought in to bring new air to these books. DC wants to put out the best book on the market. Both of us, regardless of what was in the past, have come on board to put this book back into the top-10 sellers again. *Superman* is a book that should be in the top 10. It was not that long ago that *Superman* had a cover blurb that said "The #1 Best-Selling Comic in the World," and we have a responsibility to try to make that happen again.

WIZARD: It's almost October. How are you going to announce your presence with authority?

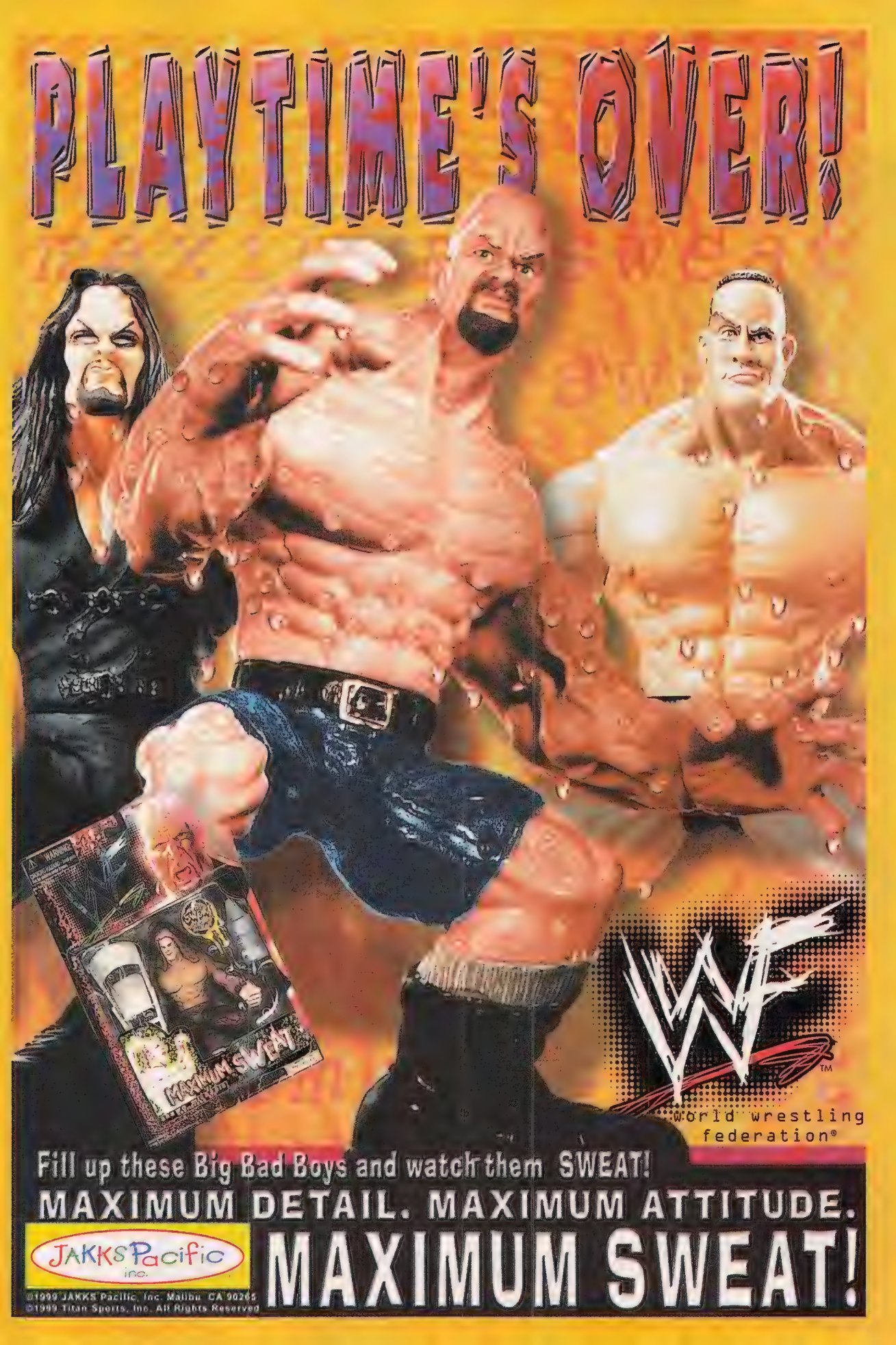
LOEB: We're gonna get an article in *Wizard* and then everyone's gonna buy the book. That's how it works, right?

KELLY: [*Laughing*] My first issue is a crazy story that makes no apologies for how crazy it is. There's a great race between Superman and this new villainess, and the prize is something extremely important to Superman. It literally goes around the world, and I'm pretty sure there are, like, 20 villains you've never seen in a Superman book before.





SUPER HAMS (From top) The two-headed Superman Monster, an impending lawsuit and crushed by kryptonite.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SUPER-FLAVAH

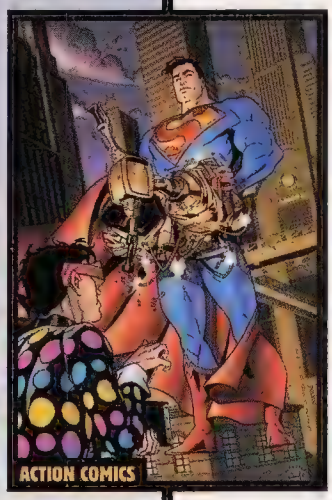
When the new Super-order hits in October, each Superman book will take on a distinct flavor. Here's what you're gonna be smackin' your lips to:

Superman

Writer: Jeph Loeb
Artists: Mike McKone and Mario Alquiza *(Ed McGuinness and Jason Martin become the regular art team in January)*
Tastes Like: Classic Superman, larger than life. "What happened on *Superman For All Seasons* surprised the heck out of me," Loeb says. "I wasn't prepared for the emotional response people had to the character. They liked the wonder and awe. It's my intent to bring that. And Superman will still punch big stuff."

Action Comics

Writer: Joe Kelly
Artists: German Garcia and Joe Rubinstein
Tastes Like: Fast-paced, sexy Superman *and* Lois Lane. "Clark is just a regular oaf from Smallville, and Lois is this super-energetic city girl," says Kelly. "There's a lot of light, fun stuff you can do with that. The book is a romp to some degree, but there will be payoffs to everything that happens."



Superman: The Man of Steel

Writer: Mark Schultz
Artists: Doug Mahnke and Tom Nguyen
Tastes Like: Superman, the sci-fi hero. "Instead of just supervillains, we're going to zoom in on the sci-fi aspect of the Superman mythos and visitors from other planets," promises Schultz. "We'll also explore Superman's Kryptonian background. It's not always a positive relationship there."

Adventures of Superman

Writers: Stuart Immonen and Mark Millar
Artists: Steve Epting and Denis Rodier (*Immonen returns as the regular penciler in January*)
Tastes Like: Down-to-earth Superman. "We'll be doing the more human-scale stories about how Superman affects normal people," says Immonen. "And we'll focus a lot on the *Daily Planet*." ■ JM

LOEB: The first story I'm telling sets the tone for where we're going. It's no secret that the first thing we wanted to do was to bring everyone back to the *Daily Planet* and put Lois and Clark back into the roles of competing reporters. And Lex Luthor becomes even more insidious. If you thought Luthor was bad before, there are things he's going to do over the next months that you won't believe. We're going to get to the Hannibal Lecter of the character, where he looks at everyone as beneath him. It's not about blowing up the planet. In many ways, it's not even about destroying Superman. It's really about seeing everyone in Metropolis as chess pieces that he can move around the board.

And it's been a long time since Superman had a big, Jack Kirby-esque throwdown where stuff got wrecked. So Mongul comes from space and he and Superman just wreck stuff. But there's a twist in that story. There's something out there that's coming and is of galactic proportion in its consequences.

WIZARD: How protective of Superman is DC Comics? This is their corporate image.

KELLY: When Eddie was introducing us to the idea of working on Superman, I really think he summed things up when he said that if Superman gets a haircut, it's on the cover of *Time* magazine. That says it all right there. You have a major responsibility that you have to keep in mind when you go to work.

LOEB: We're talking about Mickey Mouse here. You can look at the way Mickey's been drawn, and there have only been slight variations since he was first running around...

WIZARD: And never an electric-blue Mickey.

LOEB: No, never an electric-blue Mickey. If you're gonna go off and do an electric-blue Superman, that's gonna go through an awful lot of channels before it comes out on the page. DC is very protective, and you've got to be aware of it.

KELLY: But the thing I find refreshing is that we can do things and make changes if we have a good reason.

LOEB: Yeah, it's an open door. We were told, "Look, if you want to bring back [1950s Super-dog] Krypto, find a way of bringing him back that we haven't heard of and we'll have that conversation."

WIZARD: Joe, how are you going to do a Krypto story that won't make me vomit?

KELLY: You know, when I was trying to convince Eddie to hire [*Action* penciler] German Garcia, I had German draw a Krypto story that would knock your socks off. He drew half of it, and they hired him on the spot.

WIZARD: So how do you do it and not make it cheesy?

KELLY: You just have to make the people care. The story was that Krypto was resurrected from the dead by an evil genius who wanted to kill Superman, with the idea that Superman wouldn't have it in him to kill his own pet. So you had a pathos story between the Man of Steel and the dog he loves, now only the dog is like Cujo. He's 20 feet high and keeps peeing fire everywhere.

WIZARD: Are we gonna see Krypto?

KELLY: Not yet. There has been no approved Krypto story, but we have an idea.

WIZARD: One year from today, what's the goal? Where do you want to be?

KELLY: I'll be conservative. I'd say in a year, the books are top-20 sellers and we're at another summit planning what will take us into the top 10. So within two years, we'll be top 10. That might be a little bit slow, but I'm being conservative.

LOEB: I'd just like people to be talking about the character when they talk about comics. There's excitement every time there's a new *Battle Chasers*. Scott Lobdell and Travis Charest have people talking about the *Wildcats* relaunch. That's what I want. If people would look at what we're doing a year from now as being that, as being the buzz stuff, that would be very, very cool.

KELLY: I have one other goal. The crazy goal. I want one of our stories turned into an episode of the "Superman Adventures" cartoon.

LOEB: [*Solemnly*] Yeah. If Paul and Bruce [Dini and Timm, co-producers of "Superman Adventures"] were to notice what we're doing...we'll know we've hit it.

KELLY: That—That!—would be cool. Because that's proper Superman they're nailing, and not just for the TV medium. It's proper in general. It's proper for comics. I want to look at their stuff and see what they're nailing. I look at our stuff as playing off of that. If they want to get a synergy going and play back and forth, that would be the ultimate goal. (W)

Wizard Senior Staff Writer Jim McLauchlin, who will play back and forth with anyone, wants you to know that an extended version of this interview is available at www.wizardworld.com.

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IN MANKIND'S TIRELESS WAR AGAINST THE VILE MONKEY LEGIONS DETERMINED TO CONQUER THE EARTH, HE WAGES HIS ONE-MAN WAR TO ENSURE THAT THE VILE, SIMIAN HORDES ARE KEPT AT BAY.

WIZARD ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS:

KEEP-SQUEEZIN'-THEM-MONKEYS LAD

IN: "STARBUCK AMUCK"

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PUT 'ER THERE, *PAD-NAH!* I'M KEEP...UH...

EXCUSE ME. I GOT TOO CLOSE TO YOU BY ACCIDENT.

KEEP SQUEEZIN' THEM MONKEYS LAD

...OH YEAH? WELL, SIDEBURNS WERE IN *LAST* YEAR.

HIPPY.

KEEP SQUEEZIN' THEM MONKEYS LAD

WOULD YOU TWO--*I MEAN*--WOULD *YOU* LIKE AN AUTOGRAPH? I'M--

R.P.D.

SQUEEZIN' ONKEYS LAD

DIRK BENEDICT!

WE LOVE YOU, FACEMAN!

THIS SUCKS SOUR MONKEY-ASS. I'LL NEVER SCORE WITH THIS GUY STEALING ALL MY ACTION.

SORRY KIDS, TIME FOR A BATHROOM BREAK.

DIRK BENEDICT

KEEP SQUEEZIN' THEM MONKEYS LAD

WITH BENEDICT IN THE CRAPPER, THIS IS MY CHANCE!

DIRK BENED

SINCE NO ONE KNOWS WHAT I LOOK LIKE UNDER THIS MASK, I COULD BE DIRK BENEDICT! JUST ONE QUICK NAMEPLATE SWITCH, AND SUDDENLY I'M--

STARBUCK! WE LOVE YOU, STARBUCK!

DIRK BENEDICT

YES, STARBUCK, BUT NO ONE LOVES YOU MORE THAN...

...SHRINKAGE!

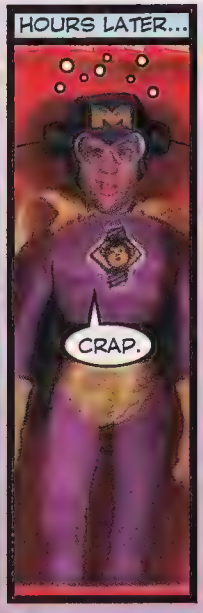
WHO?

SHRINKAGE, DAMMIT! AN EVIL CRIMINAL MASTERMIND WHO--OPERATING FROM THE SECRET BASE IN HIS MOM'S BASEMENT--HAS AMASSED THE THIRD-LARGEST TOY COLLECTION IN THE TRI-STATE AREA!

AND NOW, THANKS TO MY SHRINKAGE-RAY™, YOU'RE MINE!
EEP!
FWASHHH!
DIRK
DUDE, WHERE'S THAT BEAM COMING FROM?!?*
*BEFORE WE GET ALL SORTS OF ANGRY LETTERS FROM PARENTS, SHRINKAGE'S RAY IS COMING OUT OF HIS BELT BUCKLE, NOT HIS TALLYWHACKER. IT'S JUST THE ANGLE OF THE PHOTO. SHEESH.

WHOA...THAT BEAM MADE EVERYTHING HUGE!
QUICK: SOMEBODY GO GET THE VAMPIRELLA MODEL AND A TURKEY BASTER. THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO TRY...

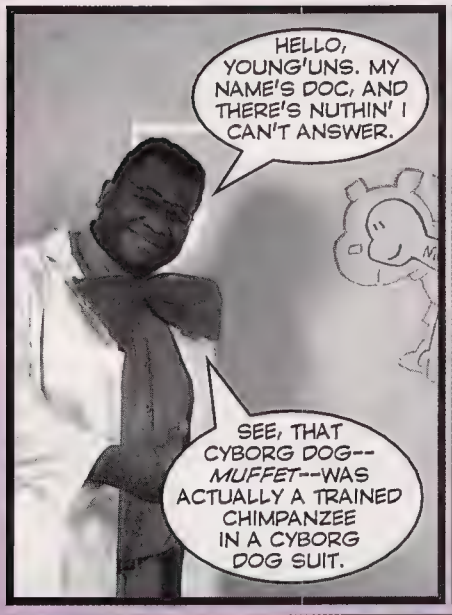
AND NOW TO PUT YOU SOMEPLACE SAFE AND WARM...
AHHH! KEEP RICHARD GERE OUT OF THIS!

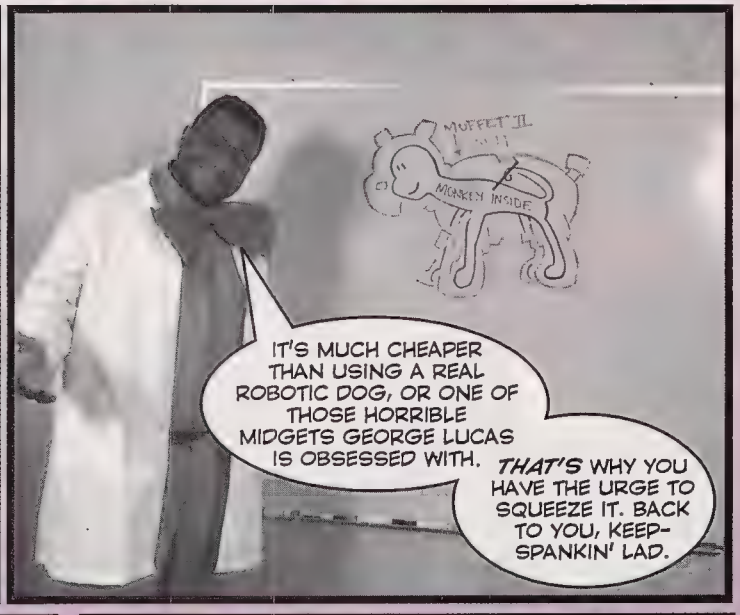

HOURS LATER...
CRAP.

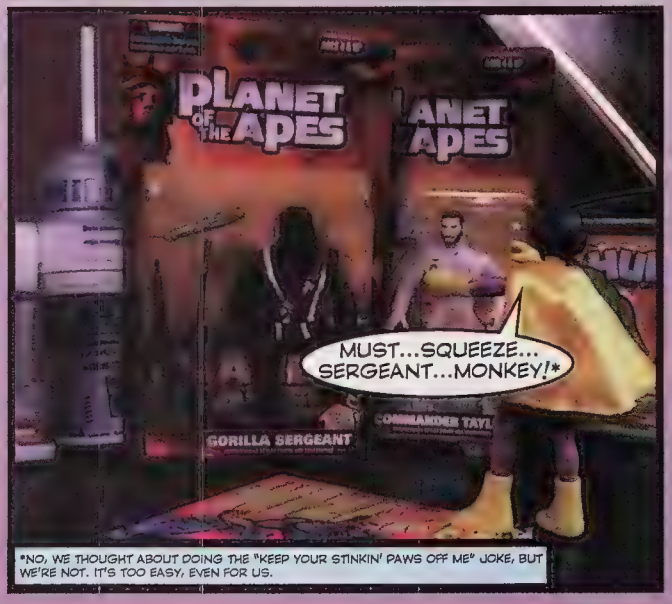
TV'S DIRK BENEDICT
I'VE BEEN MINT-ON-CARDED!
8 INCH ACTION FIGURE

AND YOU'RE ALL MINE! NOW TO SEE IF MY MOM'S OFF HER COMPUTER SO I CAN LOG ON TO eBAY AND SEE HOW MUCH YOU'RE WORTH!
TV'S DIRK BENEDICT
AND WHILE YOU'RE UP THERE, CHEWBACCA, DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE NOSE HAIR. YOU GOT ZZ TOP UP THERE?

AND, AS SHRINKAGE HEADS UPSTAIRS...
I'VE GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE, AND FAST!
TV'S DIRK BENEDICT
ANYBODY DRESSED LIKE THAT AND STILL LIVING AT HOME IS BUCKING TO BE IN THE "SILENCE OF THE LAMBS" SEQUEL!

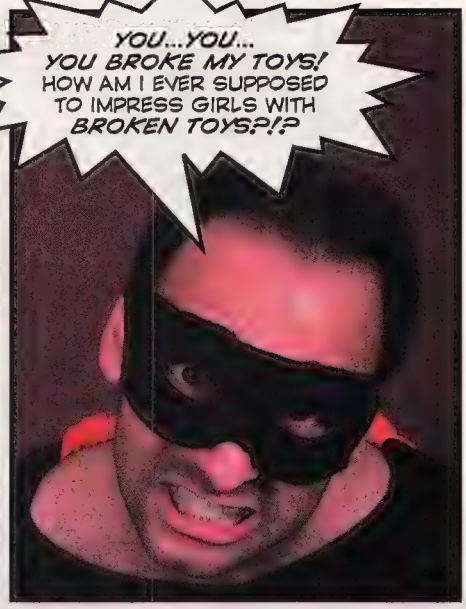






*NO, WE THOUGHT ABOUT DOING THE "KEEP YOUR STINKIN' PAWS OFF ME" JOKE, BUT WE'RE NOT. IT'S TOO EASY, EVEN FOR US.

MOMENTS LATER...
WHAT'S WITH ALL THE NOI--MY TOYS!
MY MINT TOYS!!
AHHH... ANYBODY GOT A CIGARETTE?


YOU...YOU... YOU BROKE MY TOYS! HOW AM I EVER SUPPOSED TO IMPRESS GIRLS WITH BROKEN TOYS?!?

I'LL SHRINK YOU OUT OF EXISTENCE!
I SO HOPE THAT ISN'T A SEXUAL INNUENDO.

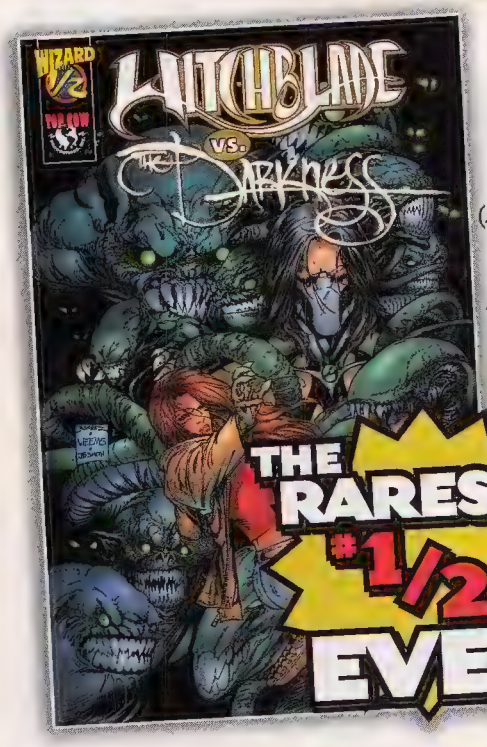
I CAN'T LET NAMBLA-BOY CATCH ME--OOOOF!
TRIP!
STUPID JAR JAR! I HATE YOU IN LIFE!

ONE CHANCE... I JUST HOPE HER MELON'S SHINY ENOUGH...

FAREWELL, DIRK BENEDICT!
FWWWW
FWASHHH!
I'LL BE SEEING THAT FURRY BELLY IN MY NIGHTMARES.

BELT... SHRINKING!
REALLY... HAVE... TO...PEE!
CRUNCH!
EVERYTHING... GETTING...DARK! AND...I'VE NEVER...KISSED...A GIRL!
CUT...IN... HALF! WHAT A...CRAPPY...WAY... TO...GO...
JA, IST GOOD. VERE IST MEIN CHOCOLATE DOUGHNUT?
GREAT. WITH THE BELT SHRUNK DOWN SMALLER THAN THE SALES ON NOVA, I'M STUCK AT THIS SIZE.
PUNT!
NOW WHAT THE HELL AM I SUPPOSED TO ...HMMM...
I JUST HOPE YOUR BATTERIES CAME INCLUDED.
LATER...
SHRINKY OR WHATEVER IT IS YOU'RE CALLING YOURSELF WHEN YOU'RE WEARING YOUR SISTER'S TIGHTS, DINNER'S READY! HELLO?
WHAT'S THAT NOISE? IS THERE A RAT IN--OH, MY GAWD!!
HEY, A LITTLE PRIVACY --WAIT. GO GET A TURKEY BASTER. THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO TRY...
THE END

WITCHBLADE VS. DARKNESS #1/2



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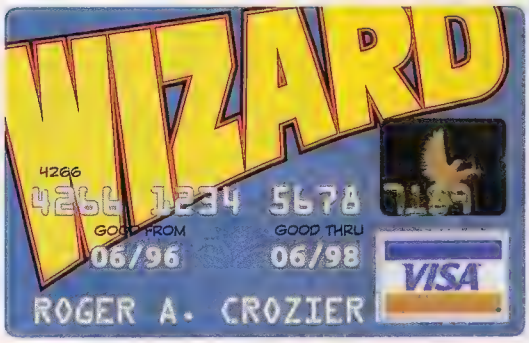

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Batman Beyond

The second season sizzles as a homework-laden Terry McGinnis faces new foes and flies solo

So, who has time to be a superhero? Young crimefighter Terry McGinnis has to juggle school, a social life and a part-time job. Big deal, you say? Well, it is when your part-time job is crusading around Gotham City as Batman in the futuristic world of "Batman Beyond." And things don't look any better for Bats in season two.

"We are going to shake things up a little bit," said co-producer Paul Dini. "We're going to bring a couple of new elements into the 'Batman Beyond' mythos."

Those elements include everything from new villains to new allies to Terry flying solo without his mentor, Bruce Wayne, guiding him. Mentor? But isn't Bruce Wayne really Batman? Okay, for those of you who missed out on the first season of "Batman Beyond," here's the scoop: Decades in the future, health conditions have forced Bruce Wayne to give up his Batman guise. Enter 17-year-old Terry McGinnis, whose father was killed by shady businessman Derek Powers. Turning to Wayne for help—since Wayne's business merged with Powers'—Terry discovered an armored Bat-suit, stole it and became the all-new Batman, with Wayne begrudgingly becoming his mentor.

But in season two, fans will get a much closer look at Terry, with Wayne taking more of a back seat—and in some cases, no seat at all, as Terry will operate completely solo. "We're trying to explore things where Terry is being more of his own man," said co-producer Bruce Timm. "We're also going to be concentrating on Terry's high-school life. We wanted to make it less like the old 'Batman' series and look more closely at how Terry has to cope with doing homework, having a relationship with his girlfriend and being Batman all at the same time."

Turning the spotlight on Terry's high-school life will also pave the way for a potential new member to the Bat-team. At some point, one of Terry's friends will have close contact with Batman and get drafted into the services as an outside ally, said Dini. Viewers will also be seeing more of the older Batman's former ally Barbara Gordon (a.k.a. Batgirl). Having replaced her father as Gotham's police commissioner, Gordon no longer approves of Batman and his methods. But like her father, she'll slowly find herself drawn to the Tomorrow Knight.

"We're going to see a lot more Barbara Gordon," said Dini. "Sometimes

UP AT BAT The Jokerz are riding Harleys. Get it?

EVISION
L TV PREVIEW

Reruns suck. Let's face it, how many times can you watch Buffy put Faith in a coma? Or see the Simpsons go to Japan? Or watch Agent Mulder enter Nazi-occupied waters courtesy of the Bermuda Triangle? Well, cheer up, 'cause fall is just around the corner. And with the change in seasons comes the two most glorious words in all of television: new episodes.

What follows is 12 pages of info-packed previews on this season's newest animated and live-action TV shows—and plenty of returning ones as well. What's more, visit our Website at wizardworld.com for insight on dozens of more projects, including "GvsE," "Men in Black" and "Weird-Ohs."

So grab a Coke, find your favorite couch and tune in.

she just has to get involved [with Batman] because there's nothing else for her to do but go along with it. She does come to realize what her father realized: that there are times when a city does need a Batman."

Meanwhile, Terry's beleaguered girlfriend, Dana, comes to better terms in season two with Terry's disappearances and preoccupation with his part-time job working for Bruce Wayne (a necessary cover to explain just why Terry's always hanging out with the old man). "We were making her into too much of a bitch," Timm stated frankly. "So we wanted to make her less of a stereotypical angry girlfriend."

But while Dana may be more understanding now, she might not be when she finds out who Terry's hanging out with. Love interest Melanie of the villainous Royal Flush Gang will be making a reappearance to complicate the young hero's life. "She's going to be coming back again to make both Batman and Terry's life hard," said Dini. Other returning villains include the sound-controlling Shriek, the amorphous Inque, the mind-controlling Spellbinder and street gang toughies the Jokerz. But as for bigwig baddie Derek Powers, both Dini and Timm don't think he'll be showing up in season two, or possibly ever again. According to them, that storyline ended when the crazed, radioactive Powers was last seen in an exploding submarine.

Still, fear not—plenty of cool, new foes will be making things exceedingly tough for Terry. "We'll be having guest stars, like musician Henry Rollins, who will be voicing a bomber-type guy called Mad Stan," Timm said. In addition, actor John Ritter will be providing the voice for another new menace, an evil, twisted psychiatrist. Also look for a character called Stalker, a weird cross between a big-game hunter and a celebrity stalker. "He's someone who is obsessed by the idea of Batman," said Dini. "He's formed this idea that Batman is an eternal spirit that infuses the soul of the greatest warrior of the time." And if the producers have their way, fans may just see the appearance of Batman's virtually immortal foe: Ra's Al Ghul.

A total of 52 episodes of the hit series have been ordered—39 shows in addition to the original 13—with plans to have "Batman Beyond" join the daily airing of the animated "The New Adventures of Batman/Superman" once a week. But with new villains, a new ally and plenty of girl trouble, season two is shaping up to be Terry McGinnis' worst nightmare. So why continue to don the bat-duds? Don't worry. That'll be answered too.

"You're going to find out some big secrets from Terry's past, especially why he wants to stay being Batman," revealed Dini. "He's avenged his father's death. He's gotten rid of Derek Powers. He's sort of done what he set out to do, why keep doing it? Well, he's got a few dark secrets in his past. By continuing to be Batman, he's trying to exorcise his soul." ■ Janet Hetherington and Sorrell Booke

Beyond Dark Knights

The Caped Crusader's been around for decades. And if things go according to plan, the Dark Knight should be around for plenty more. But which futuristic DC continuity is going to be the "real" one? Heck if we know. We just thought it'd be neat to compare the "Batman Beyond" cartoon's Batman vs. Frank Miller's *Dark Knight Returns* Batman.

	"Batman Beyond"	"Dark Knight Returns"
Batman	A skinny, young, energetic punk	A bulky, old, tired curmudgeon
Partners	**Bruce Wayne:** A stocky, old, tired curmudgeon	**Robin:** A skinny, young, energetic, punk gal
Girlfriend	A cute, spunky, black-haired babe	An old, wrinkled, black-eyed whore
Villains	**Blight** (the man with two faces) and motorcycle street gang the **Jokerz**	**Two-Face** and the **Joker**
Gotham City	A multicultural, "Jetsons"-like technological wonderland	A cesspool
Lowest Moment	Grounded by his dad for fighting in school	Fighting with his teen partner on a school night
Inspiration	Members of the **Jokerz** street gang mark their faces with Joker makeup	Members of the **Sons of the Bat** street gang mark their faces with the Bat-symbol
Hobbies	Video games, dancing, wrestling	Dragging 220-pound thugs to the top of Gotham Towers just to hear 'em scream
Claim to Fame	Routinely receives a super ass-kicking	Kicked **Superman's** ass

THE AVENGERS

A surprising line-up of Earth's Mightiest Heroes battle Ultron and deal with a member's death

Forget Emma Peel and John Steed. These Avengers are truly Earth's Mightiest Heroes. And come September, they'll star in Saturday Morning's Mightiest Cartoon.

As part of Fox Kids Saturday morning line-up, "The Avengers" takes Marvel Comics' premier superteam to an animated level. Known for its long and rich history, the comic *Avengers* has gone through countless roster changes and dozens upon dozens of members. An eclectic mix of armored heroes, mutants, gods and androids, the Avengers have always been there to protect the weak.

"It's a privilege to bring to life characters that have been close to me since I was a teenager," said producer Ron Myrick. "For me, it's like coming to work to play! We're playing [the Avengers] more like government agents. They will be working political espionage. The villains will always be extreme, but there will be a world or country threat that only the Avengers can deal with."

Filling out the animated Avengers' line-up are the Wasp, Wonder Man, the Vision, Scarlet Witch, Tigra, the Falcon, Hawkeye and team leader Ant-Man. Of course, standard Avengers mainstays like their ever-faithful butler, Jarvis, and the glorious Avengers Mansion will be properly showcased. Set roughly 25 years in the future, "The Avengers" gives its creators a chance to showcase some of the team's advanced science, like the new Avengers battle armor, the mansion's holographic technology and self-aware computer and the latest Avengers Quinjet.

"All the characters will have customized armor suitable for each of their personalities and abilities," said Myrick. "The armor will give them the ability to go into different environments, like extreme heat or cold, underwater or outer space, and it will enhance their abilities."

The series begins with the evil, robotic despot known as Ultron threatening the President's life with an army of flying robots and his latest creation, the android called the Vision. When Wonder Man's left at death's door following Ultron's attack, the groundwork is laid for a major storyarc. Subsequent developments will see the Vision and the Falcon join the team, with Ant-Man later transferring Wonder Man's essence (his "engrams") into the Vision. How these engrams affect the android's standing amongst his teammates (particularly with the Scarlet Witch, with whom Wonder Man has had a romantic relationship) and the eventual fate of the injured hero will be slowly revealed. "He will be brought back coinciding with his evolution in the comic books, where he becomes pure energy," promised Myrick of Wonder Man's transformation.

There will also be opportunities for each Avenger to step into the spotlight. One show features Hawkeye returning to the traveling carnival he was raised on to face his old mentor, the Swordsman. Another sees the Scarlet Witch setting out to rescue her teacher of the arcane arts, Agatha Harkness, from the Salem Seven.

Other episodes will show insights into how each of the characters deal with their personal lives when they're out of costume. The Falcon has an extreme sense of loyalty to the community he was raised in, maintaining a private identity and apartment there as well as being a community leader. The catlike Tigra, on the other hand, is the only Avenger who *can't* pass as human in public. That inability to become an ordinary person with an outside life will weigh heavily on her.

"The really good cop shows on television have these groups of people who go in every day and do these tough jobs because they think it's important," said story editor Eric Lewald. "They have personal lives and they have worries, but somehow they persevere. That's what makes them heroic, and it also makes the Avengers heroic. They have lives but they also feel compelled to save the world."

Expect to see guest appearances from such familiar comic book Avengers villains as the Atlantean warlord Attila, Baron Zemo and the Masters of Evil, Egghead, Wonder Man's evil brother the Grim Reaper, the time-traveling Kang the Conqueror and the animal-like Zodiac Gang. As well, look for cameos by Namor the Sub-Mariner and founding Avengers Iron Man and Captain America. One episode in particular will highlight the pressure Ant-Man feels to live up to Captain America's legendary leadership abilities, which will force the two into an unintended rivalry. But don't expect powerhouse members Iron Man and Cap to move back into their old rooms at Avengers Mansion.

TEAM SPIRIT Smells like... bug spray, wet fur and 13 episodes.

"When it comes to characters like Iron Man, Thor and Captain America, with these being the biggest icons of the series, we don't want them to supersede our status team," explained Roland Poindexter, vice president of programming at Fox Kids. "They're going to make special appearances and they'll figure prominently in the episodes in which they'll appear, but it's always about how they relate to our regular cast members."

Fox has already ordered 13 episodes of the series, and if "The Avengers" is a hit, the company is preparing an additional five episodes. "We're breaking stories right now, just so once the show premieres we can get new episodes on the air as soon as possible," said Poindexter. "We don't know when those episodes will be going into production, but we're hoping it's as soon as possible."

One of the most tantalizing ideas being tossed around for the future? Try a two-part episode where the Avengers face off against another superhero team. Namely, the X-Men. Here's hoping. ■ PATRICK SAURIEL

avengers assembled

With, like, 265 Avengers to choose from, who made the final cut on this September's "The Avengers" animated series? Sorry, no big guns like Captain America, Iron Man or Thor (though they will make cameos), but take a gander:

ANT-MAN While he still has the power to shrink or grow in size, team leader Ant-Man feels his major contribution to the team is his scientific mind and his ability to think out contingencies.

THE WASP In addition to being able to shrink and fire stinging blasts, Wasp's family background and standing as a wealthy socialite will open doors in government and provide the team with a direct means to speak to world leaders.

WONDER MAN The most well-liked Avenger, the powerhouse Wonder Man works as actor Simon Williams in his secret identity. But even with his super-strength and ability to shoot beams of force from his eyes, he's laid low before the end of the first episode.

THE VISION Programmed with the essence of the fallen Wonder Man, the artificial lifeform known as the Vision rebelled against his creator, Ultron, and joined Earth's Mightiest Heroes.

SCARLET WITCH With her unpredictable, reality-bending powers, the Scarlet Witch has the potential to be one of the most powerful Avengers.

TIGRA Hyperactive and in-your-face, the catlike Tigra is the youngest member of the team. She's also the only member who can't pass for normal and as such will be forced to consider if she can ever have a normal life.

THE FALCON A superhero from Harlem, the high-flying Falcon had to be convinced that joining the Avengers and fighting evil on a global level would help his neighborhood in the end.

HAWKEYE The team's maverick and most down-to-earth member, Hawkeye's the man with the bow. After beating the bad guys, he's the Avenger most likely to go grab a beer and swap stories about his early days working in a carnival. ■ PS

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Spider-Man Unlimited

Spider-Man's cosmic journey offers 'Unlimited' twists on the Marvel Universe

If you live in New York, plan on beefing up security. It seems Spider-Man's heading out of town. Way out of town.

It's all part of "Spider-Man Unlimited," the brand-new animated series debuting this September on the Fox Kids Saturday morning line-up. The story begins when scientists discover a parallel universe and send astronaut John Jameson to explore this new world dubbed "Counter Earth." But when Spidey villains Carnage and Venom show up at the launch, they hitch a ride and all contact with the shuttle is lost. It's up to Spidey to pursue his vicious foes and recover Jameson—but not before asking the Fantastic Four's resident genius, Reed Richards, for a new costume to handle the unknown menaces of Counter Earth.

"When we were first confronted with a situation of doing a Spider-Man that was a different sort of thing, we were thinking about the fans and what we could do to make it cool," said producer Will Meugniot, who's worked on plenty of animation from "Spider-Man and his Amazing Friends" to "X-Men." "And as we go through production, I'm getting more and more encouraged. I see Spider-Man moving like Spider-Man should more than I've ever seen before in animation."

Made up of microscopic, nanotech robots, Spidey's new threads will do more than just *look* cool. They'll also help him sneak around this strange new world. "We're trying to do as much as we can at night, because I think Spider-Man looks best against dark backgrounds," said Meugniot. "If he's on the wall of a building and it's in cast shadow, he'll be blending into the shadow a little bit."

NEW THREADS Spidey launches into a new millennium with a whole new wardrobe.

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While the creators are purposely keeping much of the detail about the 13 episodes ordered so far a secret, they let a few things slip. Counter Earth has been conquered by species-tampering geneticist the High Evolutionary, who's created a new race of half-animal/half-human beings known as Beastials. Natural humans are now second-class citizens. Eventually Peter will discover Jameson now leads a group of revolutionaries taking a stand against the Evolutionary. Additionally, the true motivation for Carnage and Venom escaping to Counter Earth and their connection to a previously unknown symbiote group-mind known as the Synoptic will make up the series' larger backstory.

As far as "counter" versions of some familiar Marvel Universe characters, comic fans can look forward to appearances from the Knights of Wundagore, the original Machine Man (X-51) and some traditional Spider-Man villains. "Pretty much most of the primary characters in the Spider-Man mythology make an appearance in some way, shape or form," revealed Roland Poindexter, vice president of programming for Fox Kids. "They may not have the same kind of relationship with Spider-Man in this world that they have in the original world, but they do make an appearance. You do see the Goblin. You do see Kraven. You see other villains like the Vulture, but again, in this world a couple of them are going to be his allies and not his enemies."

Beyond all the twisted characters and unique settings, what separates this Spider-Man adventure from the others is the series' undertone. Just ask Poindexter. "The undertone of the series is much more than villains trying to take over the world or get rich," he said. "This is about oppression and classes and racism. It's dealing with more sophisticated themes in addition to good-old-fashioned superheroes and supervillains. It's actually going to come across as a very mature show, visually and narratively."

■ Patrick Sauriol

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Unlimited Cast

Think you know Spider-Man? Think again. Ol' Webhead's donning some new duds and visiting an all-new planet called Counter Earth in this fall's all-new "Spider-Man Unlimited." Here's a rundown of the gang:

Spider-Man With a new nanotech-laden suit, Spider-Man journeys to the dangerous world of Counter Earth, where the fascist High Evolutionary reigns supreme.

Venom and Carnage Two of Spidey's greatest foes, the symbiote-driven Venom and Carnage catch a ride to Counter Earth for mysterious reasons.

The High Evolutionary With his genetically engineered half-animal/half-human Beastials at his command, the High Evolutionary rules Counter Earth with an iron fist.

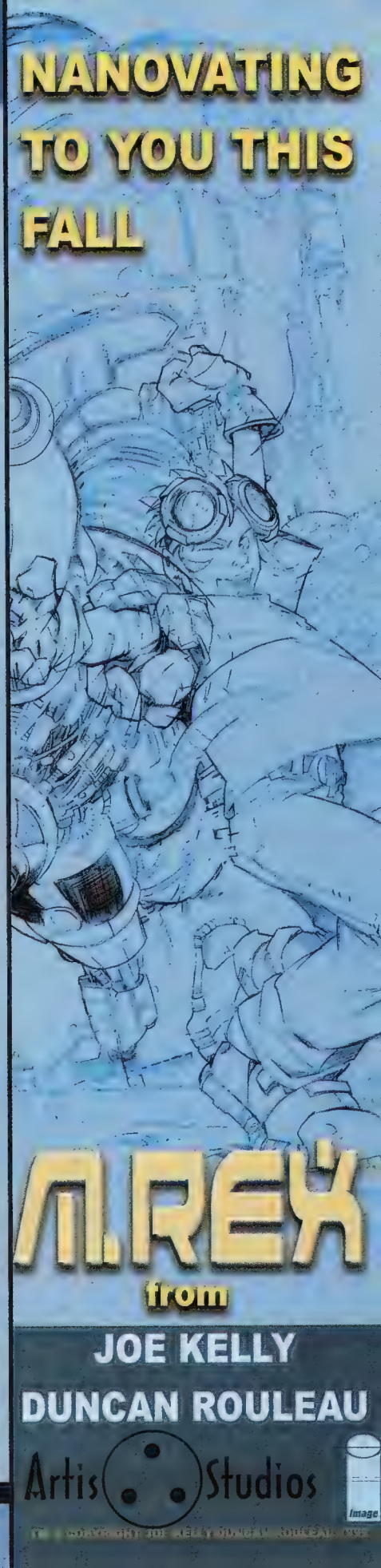
John Jameson *Daily Bugle* head honcho J. Jonah Jameson's pilot son journeys to Counter Earth and leads an underground group of revolutionaries against the fascist High Evolutionary.

Git Completely wrapped in bandages, this mysterious member of Jameson's underground revolutionary team has strange powers that allow him to get in and out of any location. He also has control over his bandages, which makes Spidey and Jameson wonder if there's anybody or *anything* still in there.

The Knights of Wundagore Owing allegiance to the High Evolutionary, these Beastials are led by Lord Tyger, a noble warrior who isn't completely tainted by his master's true evil; the warlike Sir Ram who'd like nothing more than to get Spider-Man on his operating table; the ratlike Lady Vermin, who finds herself strangeley attracted to Spider-Man; and the aggressive Lady Ursula, a bearlike character who has a tendency to fight first rather than talk things out.

The Goblin Here the Goblin is a serious superhero who dispenses justice with silly things like pumpkin bombs. He ain't Norman Osborn, but his secret identity will eventually be revealed at some point later in the season.

The Synoptic Referred to as the collective mind of symbiotes by Venom and Carnage. The symbiotic villains' sinister plans on Counter Earth involve the Synoptic, however, the purpose of their visit will slowly be revealed over the course of the season. ■ PS


NANOVATING TO YOU THIS FALL
M.REX
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JOE KELLY
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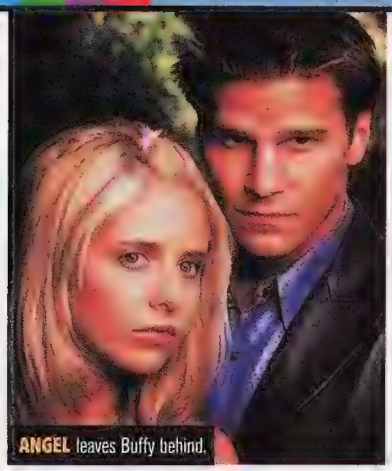

ANGEL leaves Buffy behind.

angel

Major Players: David Boreanaz (Angel), Charisma Carpenter (Cordelia Chase), Glenn Quinn (Doyle); Joss Whedon (series creator)
Time Slot: Tuesdays, 9 p.m., WB; series premieres in September or October
Premise: The vampire Angel has left Sunnydale behind and made a new home for himself in Los Angeles. There, Angel starts a new life fighting against dark forces that threaten both the innocent and his own soul.
The Scoop: Angel's not going to set up shop in L.A. all by his lonesome. Joining him will be "Buffy" co-star Cordelia and his new mentor, Doyle. 13 episodes have been ordered so far, with the option for a full season's worth.
Didja Know? WB! has promised crossovers for the "Buffy" cast on "Angel," but the network won't release any info about upcoming storylines. One unconfirmed rumor states Cordelia will die and return as a ghost.

Beast machines

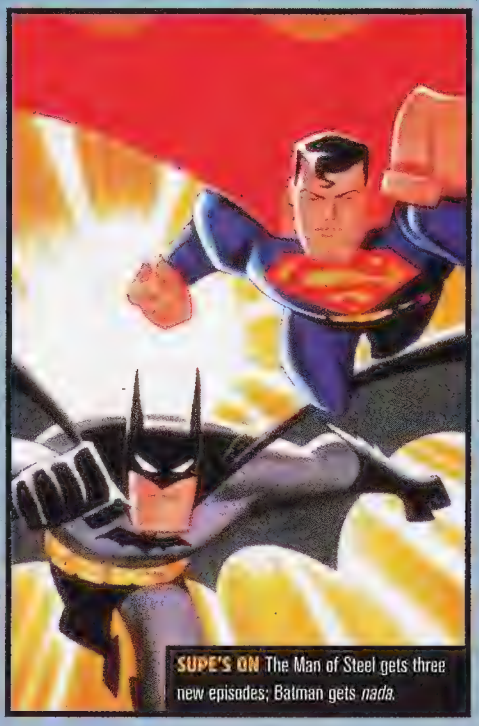
Major Players: Marty Eisenberg, Bob Skir (story editors); Mainframe Entertainment (animation house)
Time Slot: Saturday mornings, Fox Kids; premiere date and time TBD

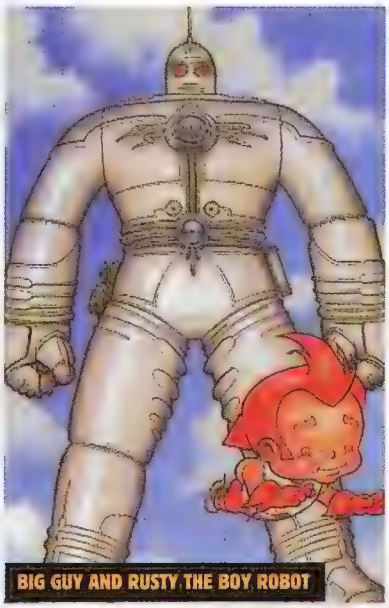
BEAST MACHINES

Premise: After departing prehistoric Earth and returning to their homeworld of Cybertron, the Transformers Optimus, Cheetor, Rattrap and Black Arachnia throw down again against their nemesis, Megatron.
The Scoop: The CGI series begins with four of the Maximal heroes from "Beast Wars" awakening on Cybertron with no knowledge of how they got there. Megatron is also there leading a new army of Transformers, the Vehicons. The heroes will also get new forms with which to change shape. "They have to relearn their abilities to transform and uncover the mystery of Cybertron," explains Dan DiDeo, vice president of creative affairs for Mainframe. New characters will be introduced, and the fates of the missing characters from the end of the last series will slowly be revealed.
Didja Know? The look of the CGI has also been altered from "Beast Wars." "The only way to describe it in simple terms is computer-generated anime," says DiDeo. "It's a very graphic storytelling in computer animation and we feel that it's extremely striking. There're richer colors, speed lines, rendered backgrounds and more depth to it overall."

the new Batman/Superman adventures

Major Players: Kevin Conroy (Batman/Bruce Wayne), Tim Daly (Superman/Clark Kent); Alan Burnett, Paul Dini, Bruce Timm (producers)
Time Slot: Saturday mornings, 8 a.m., Kids' WB! (plus 4 p.m. Monday-Friday); new episodes premiere in September
Premise: This hour-long animated series features two episodes starring either Gotham City's protector, Batman, or Metropolis' flying hero, Superman.
The Scoop: There're only three new episodes of "Superman" premiering this fall. In the two-part episode "Legacy," Darkseid strips Superman of his memory and then adopts the Kryptonian as a son so he can conquer Earth. In "The Demon Reborn," Batman revisits Metropolis to help the Man of Steel defend himself against the maniacal Ra's Al Ghul. After that, there are no further plans to make new episodes of either "Batman" or "Superman." The three producers (along with Glen Murakami) are instead swamped with their futuristic, smash-hit, follow-up series, "Batman Beyond."
Didja Know? Producer Paul Dini has been in animation for quite some time, having worked in some form or other on "Fat Albert," "Dungeons and Dragons" and "Tiny Toons."


SUPE'S ON The Man of Steel gets three new episodes; Batman gets *nada*.


BIG GUY AND RUSTY THE BOY ROBOT

Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot

Major Players: Jim Hanks (Dwayne Hunter), Jonathan Cook (The Big Guy), Pamela Segall (Rusty); Duane Capizzi (story editor)

Time Slot: Saturday mornings, Fox Kids; premiere date and time TBD

Premise: Based on the 1995 Dark Horse mini-series by Frank Miller and Geof Darrow, 26 episodes of this animated series have been ordered. The Big Guy, the world's greatest protector, begins tutoring his heroic protégé, Rusty the boy robot. Little does Rusty know that Big Guy has a secret that could jeopardize Rusty's future and perhaps the safety of the planet.

The Scoop: When the Big Guy robot was first introduced, the world believed him to be a robotic hero with artificial intelligence. But unfortunately, the technology just wasn't up to speed, so a soldier named Dwayne Hunter was chosen to pilot the suit. Now after years of serving the planet, Big Guy finally has a replacement in the form of Rusty—but there's just one tiny problem. When Rusty is activated, he has the mind of a 9-year-old, and his inexperience is overwhelming. So the military gets Dwayne back in the suit where he has to train this impressionable kid robot who looks up to Big Guy as his idol. But to make sure he doesn't jeopardize Rusty's programming, Dwayne cannot reveal to him that he's just a guy inside a suit and not some giant robot. Look for the robotic duo to take on alien invasions, other robots and evil humans that believe in using their superior technology to take over the world.

Didja Know? Yep, that's actor Tom Hanks' brother Jim voicing the character of Dwayne Hunter!

Buffy the Vampire Slayer

Major Players: Sarah Michelle Gellar (Buffy Summers), Nicholas Brendon (Xander), Alyson Hannigan (Willow); Joss Whedon (series creator)

Time Slot: Tuesdays, 8 p.m., WB; fourth season premieres in late September or early October

Premise: Buffy Summers is a Slayer, the Chosen One who destroys vampires and demons. Aided by her Watcher and friends, Buffy fights against evil in her hometown of Sunnydale, which also doubles as the

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

Hellmouth. Now she's graduated high school and is preparing to enter college this fall…but she's still got monsters to kill.

The Scoop: After pulling the series finale and then airing it later this past summer, Buffy and her friends defeated the mayor and finally graduated high school. So now what? WB is playing it cool and not releasing any dish about what the Sunnydale gang will be doing aside from hitting the books of higher education.

Didja Know? There's been talk of making a new "Buffy" movie with the TV show's cast, but creator Joss Whedon's been too busy with the "Angel" spin-off series to get the film off the ground.

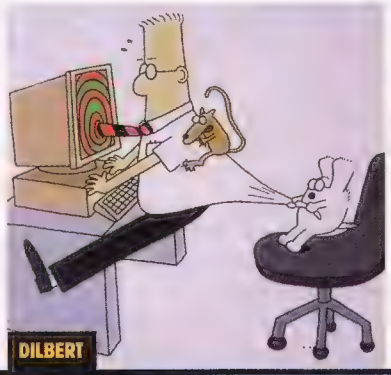
Dilbert

Major Players: Daniel Stern (Dilbert), Chris Elliott (Dogbert), Jason Alexander (Catbert); Scott Adams, Larry Charles (executive producers, series developers)

Time Slot: Tuesdays, 8 p.m., UPN; second season premieres Oct. 5

Premise: Welcome to the world of office politics and corporate double-speak as seen through the eyes of an everyday white-collar office engineer named Dilbert. Along with his co-workers Alice, Wally and Loud Howard, Dilbert tries to make sense of the nonsensical decisions made by his Pointy-Haired Boss and power-hungry canine roommate Dogbert.

The Scoop: The next season of "Dilbert" will feature more guest voices, including Andy Dick ("NewsRadio") as an annoying office


DILBERT

For more information on "Farscape," "Mission Hill," "The P.J.s" and more, visit

THE COMIC THAT WILL SAVE THE WORLD
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assistant, Christopher Guest ("Spinal Tap") as an artificially created son of Dilbert and comedian Buck Henry as Dilbert's father (the Dadbert!), who's been lost in a mall for the past 20 years.

Didja Know? In this season's opening episode, Dilbert's new Seven of Nine alarm clock is actually voiced by the real "Star Trek: Voyager" Seven of Nine, Jeri Ryan.

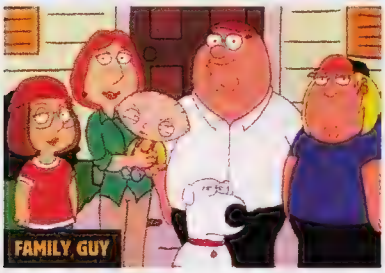
Family Guy

Major Players: Seth MacFarlane (Peter Griffin/Brian the Dog/Stewie Griffin, series creator), Alex Borstein (Lois Griffin), Seth Green (Chris Griffin)

Time Slot: Thursdays, 9 p.m., Fox; second season premieres Sept. 16

Premise: At first glance, the Griffin family might appear normal—that is, if you ignore the fact that baby Stewie has the mind of a world-conquering evil genius. However, the only sane one of the bunch is Brian, the intellectually speaking dog who enjoys a good martini every now and then.

The Scoop: The rock band KISS will lend their voices for an upcoming episode this season. So will Adam West (the original TV Batman), Will Ferrell from "Saturday Night Live," Erik Estrada ("CHiPs"), Lee Majors ("The Six Million Dollar Man"), Robin Leach ("Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous"), Ben Stein and the entire former cast of "Murphy Brown." And rumor has it that Stewie could be getting some sort of girlfriend.



Didja Know? Richardson Schell, a Connecticut prep-school headmaster at Kent School, was quite upset that MacFarlane (who attended Kent) chose Griffin as the "Family" surname. Apparently, Schell has an aide named Griffin, and asked MacFarlane to change the name before the series debuted but was refused.

Futurama

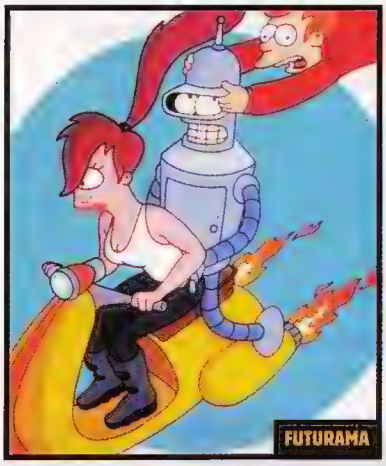
Major Players: Billy West (Fry), Katey Sagal (Leela), John DiMaggio (Bender); Matt Groening, David X. Cohen (creators, producers).

Time Slot: Sundays, 8:30 p.m., Fox; second season premieres Sept. 19

Premise: Frozen on New Year's Eve 1999 and reawakened one thousand years later, former pizza-delivery guy Philip Fry now has a job working for Galactic Express. Along with Leela the one-eyed alien babe and the slacker robot Bender, Fry travels the galaxy making sure you get your delivery on time.

The Scoop: After producing nine episodes, "Futurama" is all set to go with its first full season of 20-odd episodes (the exact number TBD). Expect episodes to include a parody of James Cameron's "Titanic" and "The Love Boat" where the crew takes a vacation onboard the Space Titanic. Also, a group of aliens from 1,000 light years away begin arriving to invade the Earth as a result of an accident Fry made back in the year 1999, and expect an 'evil Bender robot' with a goatee, à la the "Mirror Universe" version of Spock from "Star Trek." This season's guest voices will include game show host (and floating head in a jar) Bob Barker and John Goodman ("Roseanne") playing an evil, robotic version of Santa Claus. "There was a programming error and he now considers everyone to be naughty," explains Producer David X. Cohen.

Didja Know? Groening got the name "Futurama" from a display General Motors made for the 1939 World's Fair.



Harsh Realm

Major Players: Scott Bairstow (Lt. Thomas Hobbes), Terry Quinn (Major Omar Santiago); Chris Carter (series creator)

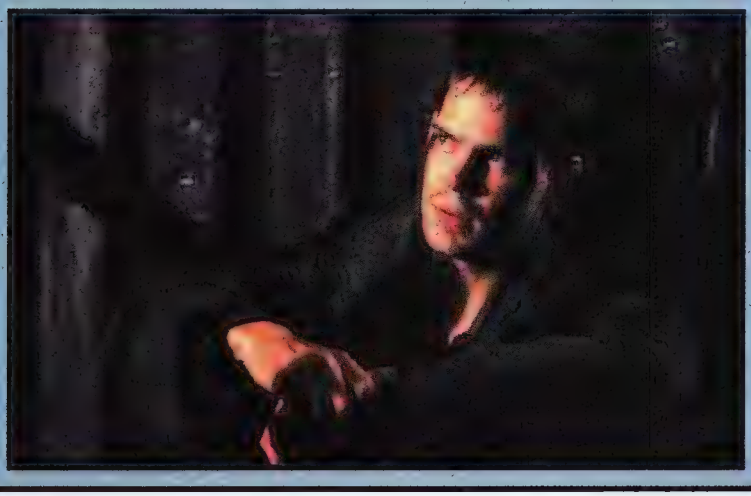
Time Slot: Fridays, 9 p.m., Fox; premieres in October

Premise: After seeing action in Sarajevo, Lt. Thomas Hobbes is ready to settle down with his fiancée, Sophie. But Hobbes is recruited for one final mission: enter a deadly virtual-reality world filled with soldiers and mercenaries and defeat their power-mad leader. The catch? If Hobbes dies inside "Harsh Realm," he dies in reality.

The Scoop: Based upon the 1993 mini-series by James D. Hudnall and Andrew Paquette, Chris Carter has taken the basic premise of the comic—a man enters a virtual-reality world to overcome its dictator—but extensively changed the rest. Instead of basing it in the distant future, Carter's series takes place in an apocalyptic, war-torn, urban setting.

Look for cameos in the pilot from stars of Carter's other series, such as Lance Henriksen ("Millennium") and Gillian Anderson ("The X-Files").

Didja Know? The only character to make the TV cut from the original comic book is the detective Dexter, except in Carter's TV version, Dexter is the name of Hobbes' dog.



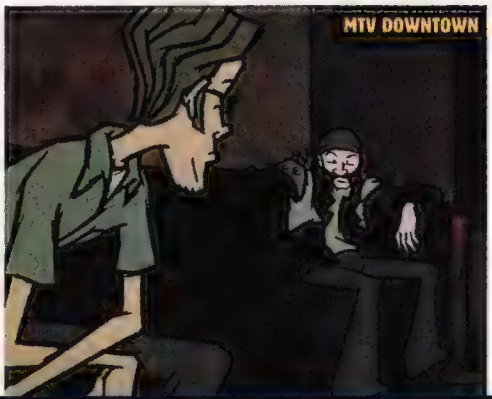
King of the Hill

Major Players: Mike Judge (Hank Hill, series creator), Kathy Najimy (Peggy Hill)
Time Slot: Sundays, 7:30 p.m., Fox; fourth season premieres Sept. 26
Premise: Hank Hill and his family live in Arlen, Texas, where Hank's got a good job selling propane and propane accessories.
The Scoop: Fox wouldn't release any info about upcoming storylines of Mike Judge's

("Beavis and Butt-head") newest dysfunctional group, but they did say to be on the lookout for guest appearances from such stars as Heather Locklear, Meryl Streep, the Dixie Chicks and Drew Carey.
Didja Know? With "King of the Hill" back to Sunday nights, Fox's Sunday night line-up will consist of a full 90 minutes of animated prime-time programming; "The Simpsons" and "Futurama" follow right after "King of the Hill."

MTV Downtown

Major Players: Chris Prynoski (series creator)
Time Slot: Tuesdays, 10:30 p.m., MTV; series premieres Aug. 3
Premise: Follow eight friends from New York City's East Village, as their lives take quirky and sometimes scary turns.
The Scoop: The eight characters range in age from 17 to 26, and come from all walks of life. There's the shy, smart and unhip Alex (24); his self-deprecating best friend Jen (23); the attractive high-school student Chaka (17); her cerebral, dreamy sidekick Mecca (17); the smart, ambitious Matt (18) who works at a comic book store; his pal and raging hormone Fruity (18); the poetic oddball Serena (20) who works with Matt at the comic shop; and the outrageous neighborhood freak, Goat (26). 13 episodes have been ordered so far for the diverse show based on real conversations from New York City kids.



Didja Know? At the show's comic shop, look for tons of industry references including Star Wars' Yak Face, Mr. T and a battle between Yoda and Wolverine.

Pokémon

Major Players: Veronica Taylor (Ash Ketchum), Ikue Ootani (Pikachu); Norman Grossfeld (producer), Satoshi Tajiri (original story premise)
Time Slot: Saturdays, 10 a.m. (plus 7 a.m. & 3:30 p.m. Monday-Friday), Kids' WB!; second season premieres in September
Premise: Ash Ketchum is out to become the best Pokémon trainer in the world. Together with his electric Pokémon named Pikachu and his teammates Misty and Brock, Ash is determined to rise in the standings of the Pokémon League Championships and earn the rank of Pokémon Master!

The Scoop: Individual storylines of this super-hot animated series are tougher to catch than a wild Pikachu, but a WB spokesperson promised Ash and his pals will travel to the far corners of the world to battle new Pokémon trainers. With 150 pre-existing Pokémon Ash knows are out there, the new episodes will debut never-before-seen Pokémon that Ash and his main

For more information on "Baby Blues," "Sliders," "Woody Woodpecker" and more, visit wizardworld.com.

adversaries at Team Rocket will capture, train and battle over.

Didja Know? Pikachu and all his pals will face off against their own clones in the "Pokémon" animated movie scheduled to hit U.S. theaters this November.

Roswell

Major Players: Jason Behr (Max), Shiri Appleby (Liz); Jonathan Frakes (executive producer)

Time Slot: Wednesdays, 9 p.m., WB!; premieres in September or October

Premise: Three teenagers share a fantastic secret: They are the children of aliens who crashed in New Mexico back in 1947. Now, some of their human friends have learned who they really are—but can they trust them to keep it a secret?

The Scoop: "The X-Files" meets "Dawson's Creek" in this new WB series. After the secret is out of the bag, Max, his sister Isabel (Katherine Heigl), their friend Michael (Brendan Fehr) and their human friends will have to stay one step ahead of the local sheriff's investigation into finding out about the alleged aliens. Thirteen episodes have been ordered so far. Look for Frakes to make a cameo appearance in the pilot, playing himself at a science–fiction convention.

Didja Know? The pilot's director and series executive producer David Nutter directed many episodes of "The X-Files" and the teen horror flick "Disturbing Behavior."

The Simpsons

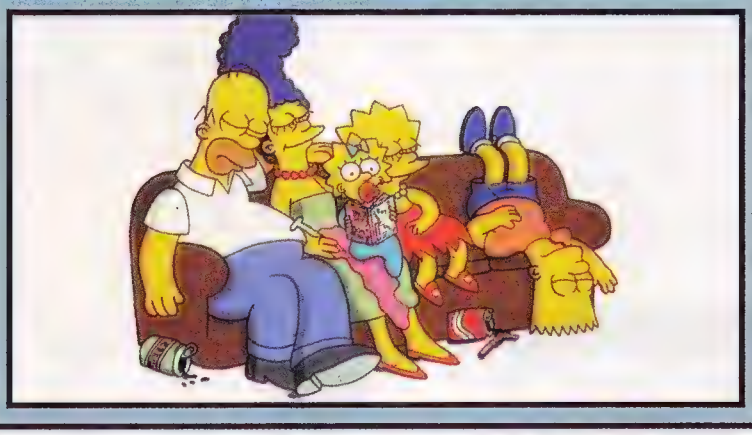
Major Players: Dan Castellaneta (Homer J. Simpson), Julie Kavner (Marge), Nancy Cartwright (Bart), Yeardley Smith (Lisa); Matt Groening (series creator)

Time Slot: Sundays, 8 p.m., Fox; 11th season premieres Sept. 19

Premise: TV's biggest dysfunctional family consists of the doughy and dim-witted Homer Simpson, his caring wife Marge and their three children: the hell-raising troublemaker, Bart, the brainy Lisa and the pacifier-sucking baby, Maggie.

The Scoop: The series premiere stars Mel Gibson as himself in "Beyond Blunderdome." When Hollywood executives test screen Mel's latest movie in Springfield, Homer and his family are chosen as representatives of the average moviegoing audience. One of the three shorts in this year's annual "Treehouse of Terror" Halloween episode will spoof recent horror films as Lisa and Bart accidentally kill Ned Flanders and then cover it up—but he comes back in "I Know What You Diddily-Iddily-Did"! Convenience store employee Apu will become a father when his wife gives birth to (yikes!) eight babies at one time. This season will also see its share of guest stars providing voices, such as Dick Clark, Lucy Lawless ("Xena"), Tom Arnold ("True Lies") and comedic magicians Penn and Teller.

Didja Know? "The Simpsons" has officially become the longest-running sitcom ever on television, with over 200 episodes so far.



Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's The Lost World

Major Players: Peter McCauley (Professor Challenger), Rachel Blakely (Marguerite), Michael Sinelnikof (Dr. Summerlee)

Time Slot: Premieres the week of Sept. 27 in syndication

Premise: A group of adventurers venture into a lost land populated with living dinosaurs. But now that they've discovered this forgotten corner of the world, can they get back out again?

The Scoop: Just like "Jurassic Park," this hour-long, live-action series will use computer-generated imagery to create the dinosaurs inhabiting this world. There'll be plenty of appetizers besides the main group of adventurers: There are two native tribes, one of ape–men and the other of lizard–men, as well as giant crocodiles and carnivorous plants.

Didja Know? Dinosaurs? A "Lost World"? Is this a Steven Spielberg rip–off? Not at all! Actually, the series is based on a short story that the Sherlock Holmes creator wrote in 1925. Spielberg's dino sequel to "Jurassic Park" just borrowed the title.

South Park

Major Players: Trey Parker, Matt Stone (voices, series creators)

Time Slot: Wednesdays, 10 p.m., Comedy Central; new episodes from the third season continue to air

Premise: Stan, Kyle, Cartman and Kenny are four foul-mouthed preteens who live in South Park, Colo., and always seem to be in the middle of some major town disaster. But no matter what happens, you can expect one constant in each show: Kenny almost always dies.

The Scoop: A spokesperson for Comedy Central told us that *they* don't even know what's going to be in the upcoming episodes, since Parker and Stone work on them right up until the last minute. Still, expect plenty of fart gags, crude language and Kenny deaths.

Didja Know?

MILLENNIUM MAYHEM

10 TV shows hitting in 2000 and beyond

AUSTIN POWERS: THE ANIMATED SERIES

HBO hopes to begin airing the first of 13 episodes of this new animated series next summer. Mike Myers will provide the voices of Austin and his archrival Dr. Evil, as well as write and produce.

CLEOPATRA 2525

This live-action series debuting next January for Studios USA features an exotic dancer cryogenically frozen and awakened in the 26th century. She teams up with a pair of freedom fighters to take on evil robots who now control this world.

CLERKS

Kevin Smith's 1994 indie hit is being produced as an animated midseason replacement for ABC next March. Six episodes have been ordered, with the possibility of more if the show's a hit. The original "Clerks" stars will reprise their film characters' voices, but don't expect to hear any four-letter words!

DOOMSDAY

Radio shock jock Howard Stern and Film Roman are developing a new animated series for Stern to play a character in. It'll be about a family driving around America after the apocalypse has come and gone, and encountering the survivors.

GENERATION X

Some kind of series based on the Marvel comic is still in development at Fox Kids, but the format (live-action or animated) and characters are still being discussed. The show's expected to debut around the time Fox's live-action X-Men film hits theaters next summer.

GOD, THE DEVIL & BOB

Another midseason replacement series, this time for NBC. The story is about a modern-day version of the Bible's Job, and how he interacts with the Big Guy upstairs and the bad guy downstairs. Robert Downey Jr. ("U.S. Marshals"), French Stewart ("Third Rock from the Sun") and Laurie Metcalf ("Roseanne") supply the voices for this animated show.

JACK OF ALL TRADES

His name is Styles... Jack Styles. Three hundred years before James Bond's birth, Jack Styles served the British Secret Service and protected the empire from the Queen's enemies. This live-action Studios USA series debuts in January 2000.

NASCAR SUPERCHARGERS

Based on the real-life racing league, this series follows the adventures of a team of NASCAR racers as they compete on the NASCAR circuit. The show, combining traditional and CGI animation, is scheduled to premiere as a two-hour pilot sometime in November on Fox Kids, with the first of 13 episodes debuting on Saturday mornings early next year.

OSMOSIS JONES

Based on an upcoming animated movie scheduled for release around Thanksgiving 2000, Kids' WB! has ordered 13 episodes for its fall 2000-01 line-up. Our hero is a white blood cell who patrols his "city": the nervous system and bloodstream of a burly construction worker named Frank.

RED VENGEANCE

Currently in development for Fox Kids and scheduled to premiere in the fall 2000-01 season, this animated series takes place during the start of the Cold War in 1950s Chicago. Red Vengeance is a crimson superhero fighting such criminal threats as the robotic Mafia boss Iron Duke, 9-year-old Telekinetikid and the master of disguise known as Pseudo. ■ PS

For more information on "First Wave," "Sabrina the Teenage Witch," "Woody Woodpecker" and more, visit wizardworld.com.

SPAWN

According to a recent survey, the South Park movie "South Park: Bigger, Longer, Uncut" is the most profane movie in history. The Colorado Springs-based Media Index discovered 399 curse words and 128 crude gestures in just 80 minutes—that's roughly five four-letter words per minute.

SCOS

Major Players: Keith David (Spawn), Richard Dysart (Cogliostro); Todd McFarlane (series creator)

Time Slot: Fridays, midnight, HBO; third season episodes are still airing in reruns

Premise: Spawn tells the story of Al Simmons, a former black-ops soldier who died and made a deal with the demonic Malbogia to return to Earth. Now he patrols the alleyways of the city and protects the homeless, while trying to escape his pact with the devil.

The Scoop: There were only six new episodes made for the third season of this animated series, including the shooting of detective Twitch Williams, the introduction of the Celestial Warriors and the appearance of new powers for Spawn. If you've missed any or all of 'em, HBO still has them playing in rotation. At press time, HBO was awaiting a decision whether or not there would be a fourth season of the series.

Didja Know? "Spawn" was recently nominated for its second Emmy award. The series is nominated for a 1998-1999 Primetime Emmy Award in the Outstanding Animated Program Category. Check out the Emmys on September 12 to see if ol' Spawny guy takes one home.

Tia For Two

Meet Sydney Fox, an impassioned explorer who raids tombs. Premiering in syndication this September, "Relic Hunter" stars Tia Carrere ("True Lies") as the sexy spelunker. But seeing as how Ms. Fox and a certain Lara Croft seem pretty similar, *Wizard* decided to stack the two up. Here's what we uncovered:

Lara Croft

Sydney Fox

	Lara Croft	Sydney Fox
Scoop	Hunts and kills creatures like Bigfoot	Searches for a 1946 baseball legend's glove
	Edge: Lara Croft	
Job	Writes travel books based on her adventures	Works as an unorthodox history professor, re-enacting Mayan ritual human sacrifices and staging violent Celtic sword fights.
		Edge: Sydney Fox
Seen in	Three video games (a fourth on the way), toy lines, books, an upcoming comic and a movie	One weekly syndicated show, video game in the works
	Edge: Lara Croft	
Threads	Tank top, sinfully short shorts and knee-high laced work boots	Barely buttoned shirt, tight pants and knee-high leather boots
	Edge: Draw	

The winner... Lara Croft, the original Tomb Raider, by a 2-1 margin! Cheers! —the Wizard Staff

Star Trek: Voyager

Major Players: Kate Mulgrew (Captain Kathryn Janeway); Brannon Braga, Michael Piller (executive producers)

Time Slot: Wednesdays, 9 p.m., UPN; sixth season premieres in September

Premise: After being taken halfway across the galaxy where Earth is 75 years away at maximum warp speed, the Federation starship *U.S.S. Voyager* sets out to return home. So far, they've come thousands of light years and faced the menace of the Borg but are still fighting to survive in the Gamma Quadrant.

VOYAGER

The Scoop: After dropping hints that she might not want to play her character for another two seasons, Kate Mulgrew signed a new contract that'll see Captain Janeway stay on the bridge for the remainder of the series. The new season begins with a conclusion to last season's cliffhanger, which found the renegade starship captain of the *U.S.S. Equinox* (played by John Savage) play hardball with *Voyager*. Upcoming episodes will see B'Elanna Torres travel to the Klingons' version of Hell to restore her mother's honor, Seven of Nine encounter three former Borgs who have also broken away from the Collective, and a two-hour telefilm in November similar to last year's "Dark Frontier" episode.

Didja Know? "Star Trek" producers Brannon Braga and Rick Berman are in the early stages of creating a new "Trek" series, possibly one that features a much younger cast, ready for launch in perhaps two years.

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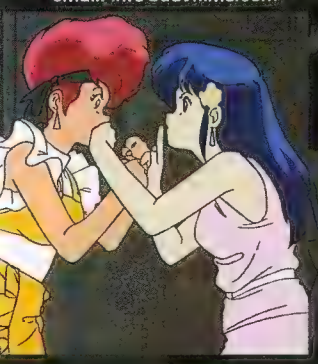
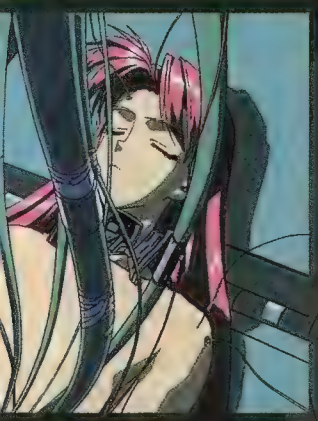


original Dirty Pair 3

Luck Has Nothing To Do With It!

Nothing scares the Godfather of the largest crime family on the planet... nothing that is, except his son marrying one of the infamous Dirty Pair. Can Ker save Yuri from a life of illicitly on fame and fortune? Or will the Family take the Lovely Angels and the rest of the 3WA on a one-way ride?

release date: 9/14/99
dub: $19.98 **sub:** $29.95



Metal Angel Marie

Electric Love

Karigari is a unique young man with the problems all young men face. He's in love with a beautiful girl and doesn't know how to tell her. So he builds an exact replica of her in his basement. The boy's already questionable mental state is further jeopardized when his android meets his heart's desire in Metal Angel Marie.

release date: 9/14/99
dub: $19.98

Those Who Hunt Elves

Chapter 3

Magical Transformations

When the T74 runs out of fuel, Junpei, Celcia and Airi are in favor of simply abandoning it, but Ritsuko just can't do it. She stays behind as the other three investigate a town being haunted by a malevolent cat spirit. It sounds harmless enough, but no one likes being abandoned.

release date: 9/28/99
dub: $24.95 **sub:** $29.95

Now on DVD!

Think Fast!

Sonic The Hedgehog The Movie

Everyone's favorite ultra-cool blue hedgehog is back in an all-new animated spectacular that will blow its American counterparts right off the tube. Sonic races deep into the heart of Robotropolis to save the planet and comes face to face with an evil Hyper-Metal robot version of himself, crafted by his diabolical arch-enemy Dr. Robotnik.

release date: 9/07/99
dub: $19.98 **DVD:** $29.98

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG © 1991, 1994, 1996 SEGA ENTERPRISES, LTD.

AVAILABLE FROM:

THE X-FILES

Major Players: David Duchovny (Agent Fox Mulder), Gillian Anderson (Agent Dana Scully); Chris Carter (series creator)

Time Slot: Sundays, 9 p.m., Fox; seventh season premieres in November

Premise: FBI agents Mulder and Scully investigate strange and frightening cases that seem to hint there are paranormal and extraterrestrial forces at work on our planet.

X-FILES

Standing in their way of the truth are government conspiracies, alien bounty hunters, homicidal mutants and surly fans who want to see pictures of Scully naked on the Internet.

The Scoop: Filming of the seventh (and reportedly final) season begins the second week of August, but finding out what happens in the opening episode ain't easy. Scripts are still being written and storylines still being worked out for the remainder of the season. It's a given the series' reoccurring characters will be back, like the Cigarette Smoking Man, The Lone Gunmen and renegade agent Alex Krychek. But whether all o' these guys will live to see the final episode remains to be seen.

Didja Know? Talk about your stalkers! A recent song called "David Duchovny" by Bree Sharp humorously talks about how the singer fanatically worships Duchovny.

STARSHIP TROOPERS: BUG WARS

Major Players: Rino Romano (Johnny Rico), E.G. Daily (Dizzy Flores), Rider Strong (Carl Jenkins); Jeff Kline, Richard Raynis (series developers)

Time Slot: Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m., syndicated Bohbot Kids Network; series premieres Aug. 30

Premise: Based on the original novel by Robert Heinlein and the 1998 movie screenplay by Edward Neumeier, the animated "Troopers" is set in the future where Johnny, Dizzy and Carl are three best friends who join the military to fight off the alien bug threat. Throughout their service, the three friends will face death and destruction on many planets as the war rages across the galaxy.

The Scoop: This computer-generated series of 40 episodes uses both Heinlein's original novel and the movie as source material to create a new take on the war against the bugs, with new characters and dozens of bug species introduced. The CGI, which looks incredible, is created by Flat Earth ("Hercules: The Legendary Journeys") and Foundation Imaging ("Star Trek: Voyager"). Over the course of the 40 episodes the full Earth-Bug war will unravel. Each week Johnny and his comrades will visit a new battlefield and show us the beginning, middle and end of that particular campaign. Characters will live and die; some battles will be won by the humans and others by the bugs.

Didja Know? Expect to see a *lot* more species than just the half-dozen seen in the movie. Plus, the series will explain how each separate species fits into the whole bug invasion plan.

XYBER 9

Major Players: Jason Marsden (Jack), Rene Auberjonois (Xyber 9), Tim Curry (King Renard); Eric Luke (story editor), Joe Baruso (producer)

Time Slot: Saturday mornings, Fox Kids; series premieres in September

Premise: Set in an unknown time in Earth's future when society has broken down into an almost feudal-like state, a young boy named Jack discovers a fantastic piece of technology: a self-aware, stafflike device called the Xyber. Joining forces with two mercenaries and a tracker, Jack and Xyber seek allies to defeat the despotic warlord Machestro and bring back order to their future world.

The Scoop: Using information the Xyber possesses, Jack will travel around the world and interact with regional rulers in an attempt to build up the resistance against Machestro's evil plans. Jack will also discover the mystery behind his parents' disappearance, and that his finding the ninth and last remaining Xyber was no accident. 13 episodes of this half-hour, animated series (mixing CGI and traditional animation) have been approved, but an additional nine episodes are being developed if the show does well in the ratings.

XYBER 9

Didja Know? Toy manufacturer Bandai is working on a line of action figures.

■ ALL SHOW WRAP-UPS BY PS

LAST MONTH...

THE HUMAN KINGDOM OF ETHERIA WAS INFILTRATED AND THE HEIR TO THEIR THRONE WAS ABDUCTED. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 20 YEARS, THE SHADOWHUNTERS *RETURN TO BOGG CITY.* THIS TIME, THEY HAVE *VENGEANCE* ON THEIR MINDS.

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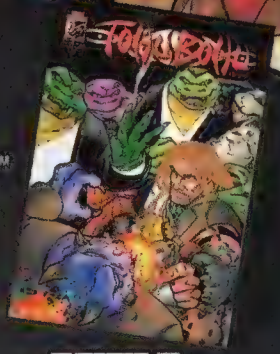

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"From the first glance, I could see that this book was going to be something different... a special and unusual talent was at work here. On closer examination, the attention to detail and the absolute flair with which the story is told and the art is executed told me that this is a creation from the heart. Thanks, guys, for a new addition to all the cool things in the world!"

– Julie Bell

CASTING call

WIZARD casts the MC2 MOVIE!

BY A BUNCH OF WIZARD STAFFERS

Do ya think there'll be any more Marvel movies in the future? Yeah, maybe there will be in the MC2 future, which takes place some 15 years in the future of the Marvel Universe. Sayyyyy, what if Hollywood combined the two and just made a kick-ass MC2 movie?

It's got everything that makes Marvel great: teen angst, the mystery of what happened to the current heroes and a lighter sense of humor, 'cause not every future is a post-apocalyptic nightmare.

Okay, maybe it's just a far-fetched dream. Who knows? But hopefully this movie lies in our future, anyway.

RACHAEL LEIGH COOK as SPIDER-GIRL

The athletic, outgoing Mayday Parker makes the most of her high school days. Rachael Leigh Cook had a lotta practice at that kinda character in "She's All That," so she's all that in our book, too.

ALISON EASTWOOD as AMERICAN DREAM

American Dream models herself after Captain America, and Alison Eastwood ("Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil") takes after her own American icon, dad Clint. Go ahead, make our movie.

ROSE McGOWAN as WILD THING

She makes *Marilyn Manson* look freaky, so the wild woman in Rose McGowan ("Scream") makes her a perfect fit for Wolverine's daughter.

ELDEN HENSON as J2

For the Juggernaut's kid, we clearly need an actor who can be A) insecure, B) charmingly immature and C) friggin' big. Elden Henson ("She's All That") aces the multiple choice.

JAMES VAN DER BEEK as PSILORD

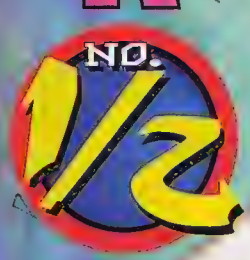
James Van Der Beek can do brainy ("Dawson's Creek") and brawny ("Varsity Blues"), so portraying a teenage Franklin Richards, a key player in the Fantastic Five, should be *no problema*.

QUIET ON THE SET!

EASTWOOD AND HENSON PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE EVERETT COLLECTION. COOK © ADAM OLSZEWKI/OUTLINE; MCGOWAN © ANDREW MACPHERSON/OUTLINE; VAN DER BEEK © KATE GARNER/OUTLINE.

KABUKI

歌舞伎



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COMING attracti

SHI'S ALL THAT

Tia Carrere makes the cut, film slated for summer 2000

Tia Carrere's in for the fight of her life.

No, we're not talking about the kabuki makeup she'll be wearing. Or the dozens of armed warriors she'll be facing. It's the movie "Shi," which Carrere's starring in. With a summer 2000 release scheduled, the woman warrior could be going up against such other comic-based blockbusters as "X-Men" and "Spawn 2." But it's all part of the Warrior's Way.

"I really enjoy playing strong female characters," said Carrere, most known for her roles in "Wayne's World" and "True Lies." "But add to the mix all the heavy-duty martial arts action, and Shi becomes that much more challenging. Working on my television series 'Relic Hunter' is definitely preparing me for all sorts of action!"

Slated to begin production in New York and Montreal this January, "Shi" can definitely be considered next summer's comic-to-movie underdog. Following the successful 12-issue "Way of the Warrior" storyarc written by creator Billy Tucci and Peter Gutierrez (who will also share screenwriting duties), the film tells the story of Ana Ishikawa, a Sohei warrior who adopts the ancient persona of "Shi" (meaning "death") to avenge the murder of her father and brother. Trained in the martial arts by her grandfather and using weaponry and costumes—both the original and recently unveiled Seri armor—taken directly from the comic book, Ishikawa sets out to destroy her enemy, Masahiro Arashi.

Best described as a Japanese Tony Robbins, Arashi brings his Yakuza ways to the masses in the veiled form of business ventures, self-help books (Awaken the Samurai Within), and Kabuki theater, all as a means of ascending to tyrannical power.

"The story really puts a modern-day twist on the Shakespearean revenge theme," said Tucci. "It's a smart, cerebral action flick, with horror elements and a ton of twists."

Setting this project apart from the typical summer action fare is the script's humanism. The fact that each character—both good and bad—changes throughout their journey is at the movie's heart. Honor is the principle driving both hero and villain. Its depiction is taken almost entirely from the comic, portrayed as haunting visions of a centuries-old war between the Ishikawa and Arashi families.

But what makes this creator who fought hard for the writer/producer credit in order to maintain creative control think his idea will strike a chord with the moviegoing populace? "Shi is not a costumed hero with superpowers," said Tucci. "She's a regular person, which makes her easier to identify with. You'll see no laser-wielding, flying bad guys in this movie."

"Ana Ishikawa is a complex and interestingly dark character," added Carrere. "She's not a one-dimensional superhero and that makes her more of a draw for both male and female audiences going into the 21st century."

Carrere, who got hooked on the *Shi* comic about

SHI-WING! Tia's turning Japanese. Turning Japanese. We really think so.

CLOSE-UP TIA CARRERE

FACTS & FACES

TIA CARRERE, 34, jumped into the mainstream as Mike Myers' gal in 1992's "Wayne's World." She then went on to star in "Wayne's World 2," "True Lies," and "Kull the Conqueror." Currently the actress is starring as Sydney Fox, an unorthodox history professor who moonlights as an international explorer in the weekly syndicated TV series "Relic Hunter." She'll also be starring as the woman warrior Ana Ishikawa in next summer's live-action "Shi" film.

TIA CARRERE PHOTO © CATANZARO AND MARGESSIAN, COURTESY OF OUTLINE. DARTH MAUL IS ™ & © LUCAS FILM LTD

four years ago, has been making appearances at comic cons, talking the project up with such notables as David Letterman, and doing everything she can to draw attention to the film. "Tia and Shi together will change the face of action movies in the 21st century," said Tucci.

As of yet, no director has been attached to the effect-laden motion picture, rumored to have a budget of approximately $30 million. With up-and-comer Franchise Pictures (currently attached to the John Travolta/L. Ron Hubbard flick "Battlefield Earth") producing and Warner Bros. set to distribute, Tucci is primed to see his vision of a female-driven "Star Wars" come to fruition. And if he has his way, things won't stop there.

"Franchise Pictures envisions "Shi" as a franchise in and of itself," said Tucci. "With the rise of cable and syndicated television, I would really love to see the property turned into an ongoing series."

But for the immediate future, Tucci and comic book fans everywhere can just look forward to a samurai summer in 2000. "Next year marks the sixth anniversary of Shi," he said. "It'd be nice to reward our loyal fans with the best comic book adaptation to ever hit theaters." ■ **ERIC MORO**

X-MEN MOVIE WATCH

THE HOLLYWOOD MUTANT SCENE

IS DARTH MAUL A MUTANT?

It's official! Ray Park (Darth Maul from "Star Wars: Episode I") will be part of Fox's "X-Men" movie, playing Magneto's underling, the highly acrobatic Toad. Word has it that Toad will appear more toad-like than his comic counterpart, with CGI helping bounce him to life.

Jim Caviezel ("The Thin Red Line") has tagged the role as X-Men team leader Cyclops, while actor Bruce Davison ("Apt Pupil") has signed on to star as the X-Men's political enemy, Senator Kelly.

As of press time, the role of Cyclops' love interest Jean Grey is still up for grabs, with Maria Bello ("Payback"), Charlize Theron ("Mighty Joe Young") and Ashley Judd ("Kiss the Girls") topping the list.

With filming expected to begin sometime in September for a summer 2000 release, "X-Men" boasts some pretty big-name talent. Already signed up are Patrick Stewart (Professor X), Ian McKellen (Magneto), Dougray Scott (Wolverine), Halle Berry (Storm), Anna Paquin (Rogue) and Rebecca Romijn-Stamos (Mystique), with Bryan Singer ("Usual Suspects") directing. ■ **PATRICK SAURIOL**

WARTS AND ALL Ray Park moves from Maul (above) to mutant, as Magneto's lackey the Toad.

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TRAILERS...

CAMERA...ACTION?

HARD-BOILED MATRIX The Wachowski brothers (who directed and wrote "The Matrix") and Nicolas Cage could be teaming up to do Frank Miller and Geof Darrow's *Hard Boiled* comic. But before they get cracking on that one, there's talk that the brothers have already committed to making two "Matrix" sequels. Warner Bros. is in deep discussions with the Wachowskis and Keanu Reeves to return to Sydney, Australia and film the two pics back to back.

IT'S A SCREAM Indie princess Parker Posey ("You've Got Mail") has seized a lead role in "Scream 3," the final chapter of the Dimension Films horror trilogy by Kevin Williamson. The closely held plot is said to be more spoof than splatter and reportedly concerns another round of grisly murders while Sydney (Neve Campbell) is on the Hollywood set for the sequel to "Stab"–the movie franchise based on the killings she survived! Also signed on board are Courteney Cox, David Arquette, Patrick Dempsey, Emily Mortimer, Kate Hudson, Deon Richmond and Lance Henriksen.

WHICH BLADE? Screenwriter J.D. Zeik ("Ronin") has turned in his new script for the "Witchblade" TV series to positive reviews. Still no word on the casting of Detective Sara Pezzini (a.k.a. Witchblade), which makes it look more likely "Witchblade" won't make it onto this fall's season.

EGGS! *Hard Boiled*'s Nixon may soon see the sunny side of the Silver Screen.

TV CHYLDE Plans are afoot for a new production based on Randy Queen's Darkchylde comic. Queen is hoping to develop a TV series ready to debut in the fall of 2000. Threshold Entertainment ("T2") is ready to deliver the special effects.

TWO MEN IN BLACK Screenwriter Robert Gordon (upcoming "Galaxy Quest" starring Tim Allen) has been hired by Sony Pictures to write the sequel to the 1997 smash hit "Men in Black." Gordon is said to be developing the script with the studio bigwigs with the idea that they can woo back stars Will Smith, Tommy Lee Jones and director Barry Sonnenfeld for the second picture.

SUPER KISS Jeph Loeb (*Superman: For All Seasons*) and Gene Simmons (KISS) have developed "Real Monsters," a comedy/horror movie about two dockworkers who deal with an abandoned cargo ship of genetically-created monsters. "The movie's a blend of real comedy and horror," says Loeb of the film in development for New Line Cinema. "It's a perfect thing for a couple of young comedians, kind of a 'Rush Hour' meets 'Frankenstein' sort of thing." Loeb and Simmons will also produce the movie, with director Adam Rifkin ("Detroit Rock City") writing the script.

BOOB TUBE There's just one thing keeping Witchblade from hitting the small screen: a casting decision.

BACK IN BLACK! Smith may return in a "MiB" sequel. Or not.

SHORT TAKES Warner Bros. has brought in Bill Wisher ("Terminator 2") to take a stab at writing "Superman"...George Lucas recently hinted that the digitally created Jar Jar Binks will probably return for "Star Wars: Episode Two."...A special edition of Kevin Smith's "Mallrats" is now available on DVD, featuring tons of deleted scenes...Arnold Schwarzenegger has attached himself to star in a new "Doc Savage: The Man of Bronze" movie project, to be written and directed by Frank Darabont ("The Shawshank Redemption") and Chuck Russell ("The Mask")...Sean Astin ("The Goonies") and Elijah Wood ("Deep Impact") are the first two cast members officially confirmed for "The Lord of the Rings." They'll play Sam Gamgee and Frodo Baggins respectively, and be shortened down to Hobbit size using digital technology...Plans for a movie of Wendy and Richard Pini's *Elfquest* comic are in the news again because of a new script..."Spy vs. Spy: The Movie" might be coming soon to a theater near you. Director Jay Roach ("Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me") is thinking about this film as his next project and word is Warner Bros. wants to get Will Smith and Nicolas Cage as the two spies...A "Jonah Hex" TV series, based on the spooky-eyed gunslinger from the recent Vertigo/DC mini-series, could be in the works. ■ **PATRICK SAURIOL**

"I'LL BE BRONZE!" Arnold pumps up as Doc Samson.

WILL SMITH PHOTO BY: ALEX SOMMARTZ; JIM HEAD PHOTO BY: GABE PALACIO

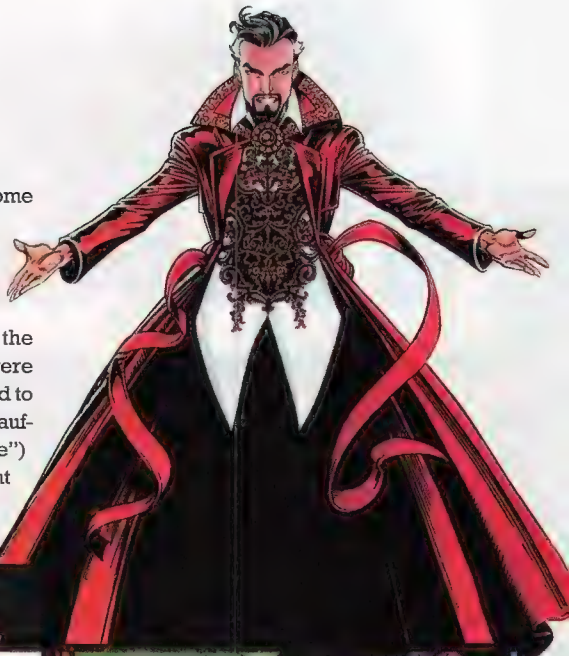
MARVEL MOVES

'FF,' 'Namor' and 'Dr. Strange' surface

Blade better watch his back.

If things go according to plan, the vampire hunter may soon have some heavy competition at the box office.

Marvel Films President Avi Arad recently leaked some information to Variety about Marvel's newest movie projects. According to Arad, Sony Pictures is in talks to acquire the film rights for "Doctor Strange," with David Goyer ("Blade") writing the screenplay. Arad also said the producers bringing Fox's live-action "Fantastic Four" movie to life were thinking of hiring director Raja Gosnell ("Never Been Kissed"). Also said to be percolating were plans for a "Namor" live-action movie, with Philip Kaufman ("The Right Stuff") attached to direct and Sam Hamm ("Monkey Bone") in negotiations to write. Also mentioned in early stages of development were the properties of "Thor," "Daredevil," "Damage Control," "Iron Man," "Silver Surfer," "Black Panther" and "Captain America." ■ PS



MARVEL MANIA Marvel movie head Avi Arad (far left), hints at movie plans for Marvel characters including (clockwise from top right): Dr. Strange, Captain America, Iron Man, Daredevil and Thor.

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BASIC TRAINING

DARICK ROBERTSON SHOWS YOU

HOW TO DRAW FEET

Feet. Just about every character's got 'em, but not everyone knows how to draw them. Now, since I happen to draw a character who likes to walk around barefoot all the time (that'd be Spider Jerusalem from Vertigo/DC's Transmetropolitan), Wizard thought it'd be neat if Spider and I showed you the ins and outs of drawing feets. So let's go.

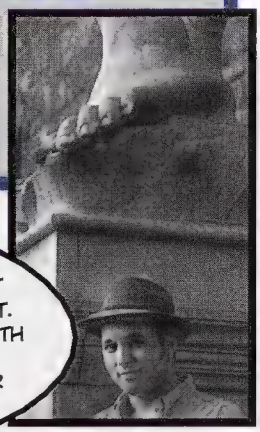
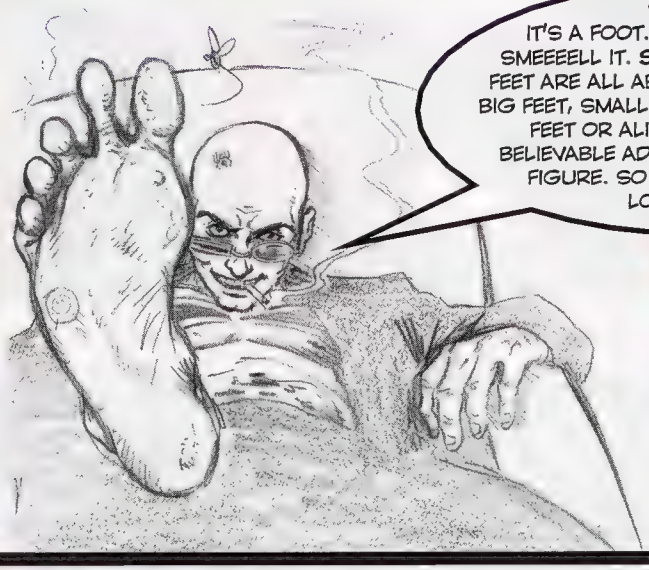


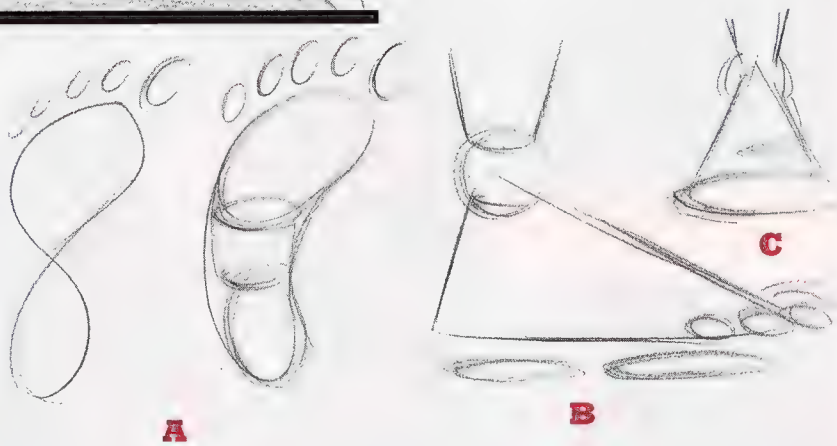
PHOTO: REBECCA HEY



FOOT LOOSE

My method for drawing feet is to start by loosely sketching a foot in non-photo blue pencil and then going in and carving out the tighter, cleaner lines in graphite. (Personally, I use a Berol turquoise HB pencil, but find what's most comfortable for you.)

A: As a guideline, consider the basic shapes you see in a foot. The bottom has a figure-eight shape to it, with the top larger and wider. I drew in a cylinder to show how you can begin building depth in the sketch. Next, sketch circles above the figure eight in sequence to lay out the toes, allowing space for the bones to connect the toes to the feet.

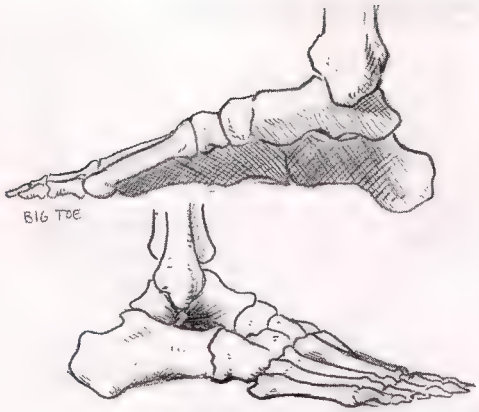


B: Feet from the side have a triangular shape, like a sloped hill. Use a circle to indicate the ankle and think three dimensionally. Always consider what you aren't seeing behind your finished drawing. It'll save you time and help create a more realistic drawing.

C: A foot seen from straight on has a conelike shape. The underside of the foot is two ellipses: the ball and the heel. Considering the ellipse in your feet will help you place your figure in perspective firmly in the background and not "floating" in it.

DEM BONES

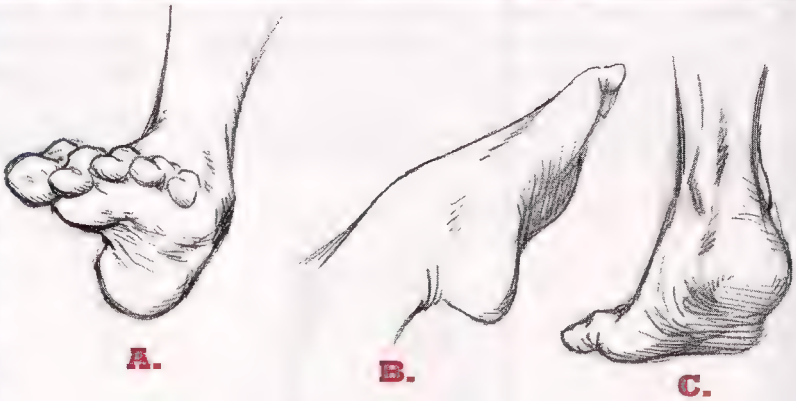
Feet aren't a particularly meaty part of the body, so learning the shape and placement of the foot's skeletal system will help you understand what you're drawing and what creates the surface anatomy and shadows of the foot.



GET SHORTY

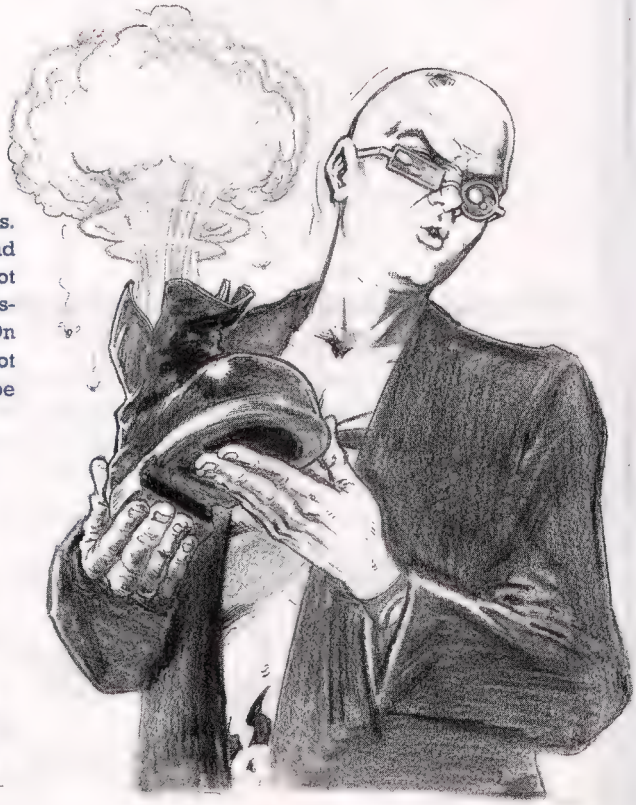
Foreshortening the foot can be tricky! But if you want your figure to deliver a kung-fu kick that looks powerful and painful, a good foreshortened foot is important! It's also important when indicating the direction your character is traveling.

When in doubt, consult photographs or a mirror. If you have a particularly difficult angle of a foot you need to draw, get a Polaroid camera and snap pictures of a friend's feet in the position you're going for. Drawing from life is the best practice. Even if your preferred style is cartoony, it helps to know what you're simplifying or exaggerating.



FOOT WEAR

Another good method to learn to draw feet is to draw shoes. Take some different shoes of all shapes, age groups and sizes and sketch from them. You'll find you'll improve a lot by learning to capture little details (One of Van Gogh's classic paintings from 1885 was of a simple pair of shoes). On superheroes, the basic outline of the foot constitutes a boot like Superman's or Daredevil's. (Women's feet tend to be smaller and more slender.)



BALL BOY

The foot follows a similar motion of moving heel to toe, whether it's running or walking. The weight of the body is supported on the ball of the foot when in midstep, so the forward foot should typically be resting on the heel while the back foot should rest on the ball.

FOOT FETISH

Creating ugly feet is fun and easy. By adding hair, scabs or unsightly toenails, you can give your character more character! You wouldn't give a homeless guy clean, smooth feet if you wanted to make him look homeless, so consider where your character's feet have been (See Fig. A).

By applying the same rules of drawing a normal foot to your monster feet, you get a more believable monster. Just dropping off a toe, adding clawlike nails that are rooted in the proper place and adding hair on top of a solid structure creates a menacing monster foot! (See Fig. B.) This is important to remember when drawing characters like the Beast and Sasquatch.

Study the textures of lizards' and birds' feet as well as other animals. By adding those textures to human feet, you can create a killer Killer Croc or even Spidey's enemy, the Lizard!

A.

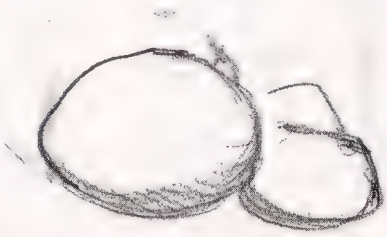
B.

TOE TAPPING

Toes are like short fingers. The nail and bones are very similar in construction. In a pinch, use the top of your thumb for reference on foreshortening and skin folds when drawing a big toe, but expand the base. Remember to concave the top of the toe a bit to make the nail set into it.

Here's a tip: Typically, the second toe is slightly longer than the big toe! Also, notice the curved line the tips of the last three toes follow (see Fig. C). Don't make the mistake of lining the tip of your foot up straight or making all your toes the same length, shape and size!

C.



SIZE MATTERS

Now that you've got all the basics, it's time to take a look at different sizes and textures. Here I've provided a number of comparisons to show you a variety of feet.

1: Here's an average human adult male foot. We can determine that from the shape, size and the bit of hair on the leg.

2: Here's the Hulk's foot. By using the same anatomy lessons, but making everything fatter and bigger, he looks more believable. Consider the size of the creature that a foot has to support. The bigger the creature, the bigger the foot should be! If a normal big toe is about the size of a canister to a 35mm roll of film, then the Hulk's should be the size of a soda can.

3: Here's the Thing's foot. I imagine that because of his rocky skin condition, his little toe and fourth toe would sort of fuse together, which is why he seems to have four toes. Again, sticking to the correct anatomy and then adding the rocky pattern to the shape makes the Thing's foot convincing as the foot of an existing creature. It's important to indicate where his foot would bend and move. I drew smaller rocks in the bends to give the appearance of regular movement.

And that's it! Again. I can't stress enough that the best place to learn, like all things, is real life. Practice drawing interesting feet from magazines. Remember that style comes from you and your interpretation of real life through your imagination and art, not by copying someone else's style. The more you practice, the better you get! Ciao!

Despite the vicious rumors on the Web and his performance on a dance floor, Darick Robertson does not have two left feet. Check out his fantastic feats of feet every month in Vertigo/DC's Transmetropolitan.

4: A baby's foot should have very few bones showing through. Babies' feet and hands are small and undeveloped, so they should appear soft and tiny. This can be achieved by drawing fewer shadows, or smooth shadow lines.

5: Lastly, here's an average, human adult female foot. A good method of indicating a female foot is to make it narrower than a male foot, and smoother in texture. With the line work, less is more. Since many women shave their legs and paint their toenails, this also is a nice detail to add if the woman is like Lois Lane, or that type.

Drawing Board

Who needs the pros? This is the showcase for WIZARD READERS' ART

This month, *Wizard* brings you "Drawing Board Black & White." A lot of you guys send in some great art that's shaded entirely in pencil, and next to some of our dazzling color entries they may get lost in the shuffle. But that really isn't fair, is it? You can see some of this stuff really looks snazzy! Any good art we get, believe me, we really love to look at. We also love givin' out prizes. This month, our grand-prize winner, Jim Sweet of Millbury, Mass. wins a Grendel Prime statue from Bowen Designs for his pencilerific pic of the Incredible Hulk. Runners-up win great goodies, too—as soon as we can clear the junk off our desks and find them. So keep sendin' in all your faboo artwork, please, and it wouldn't hurt to send in homemade chocolate chip cookies with it, either. Got it? Good.

THIS ONE CAUGHT OUR EYE

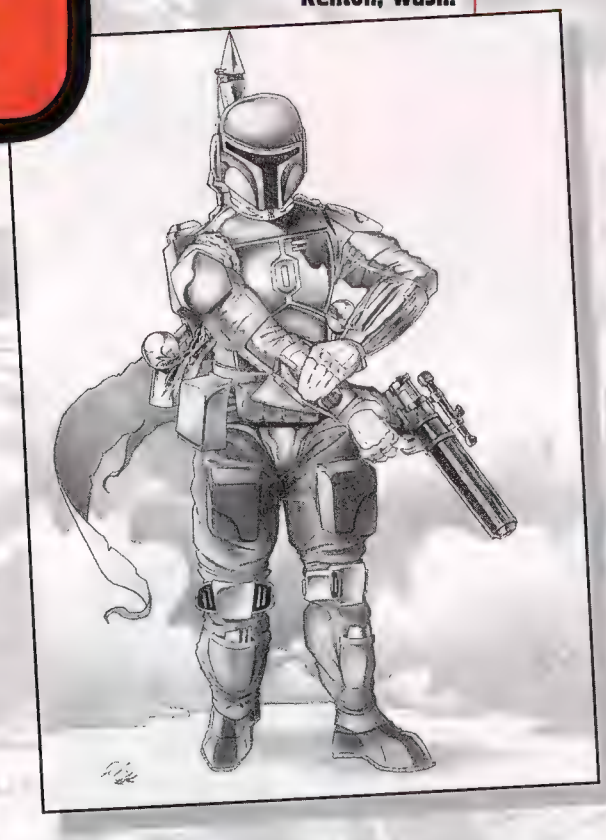
GRAND-PRIZE WINNER

RAMPAGING HULK

JIM "I'M TOO" SWEET
Millbury, Mass.

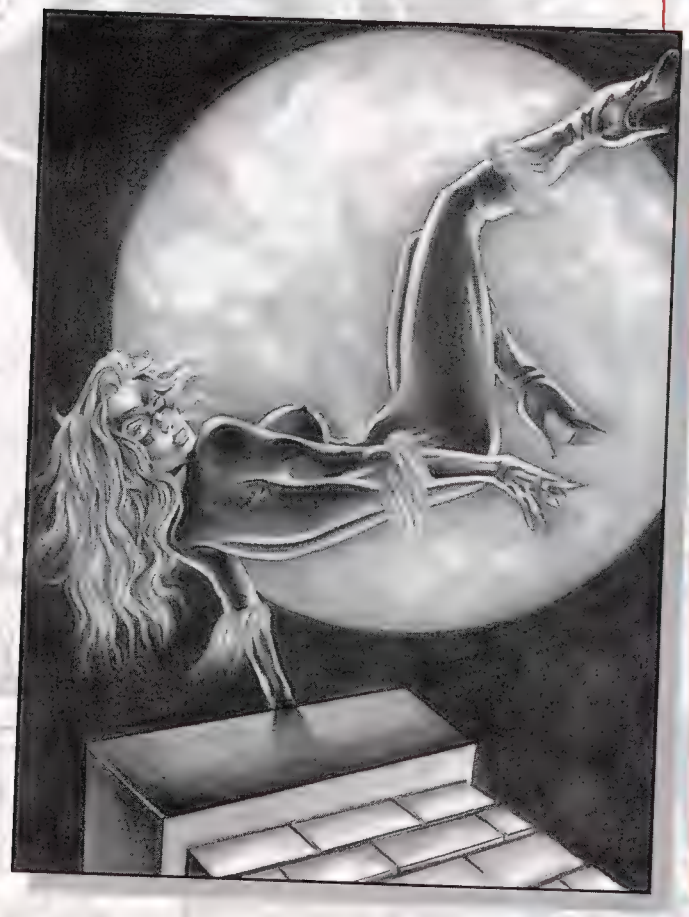
THE BOOTY

STUMPY FETT
HOLANI ALO JR.
Renton, Wash.



FLYING BEAUTY
ALEX HEMINGER
Indianapolis, Ind.

HELLO, KITTY
MATT HUGHES
Kennesaw, Ga.



HEY! BE IN WIZARD!

Want your art to appear in future issues of *Wizard*? Think you've got what it takes? (Quality *and* originality count, y'know.) Hey, it worked for pros like Jeff Matsuda and Leinil Francis Yu, who went on to stardom! Then send your "Drawing Board" entries to:

SUBMIT!

"Drawing Board"
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

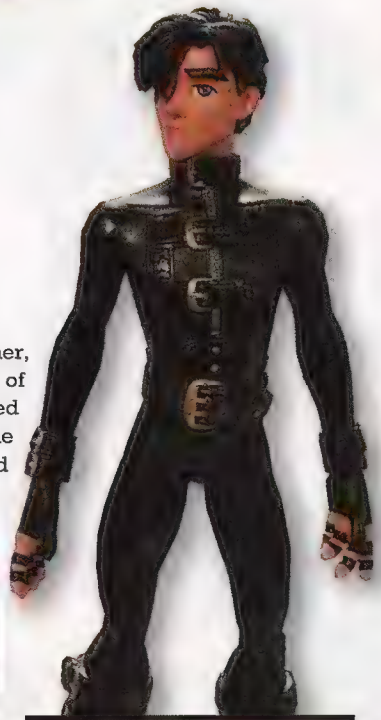
And follow these rules or else: Use any form of unlined paper or posterboard (no larger than 8 inches by 11 1/4 inches) and any medium (oils, crayon, mustard, etc.—but not neon inks). Put your name, full address and TELEPHONE NUMBER on the back of your piece, and mail it flat to avoid damage. **You must also include a color photo of yourself.** All entries are non-returnable and become the property of Wizard Entertainment. Employees of Wizard Entertainment are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Got it? All right, good luck!

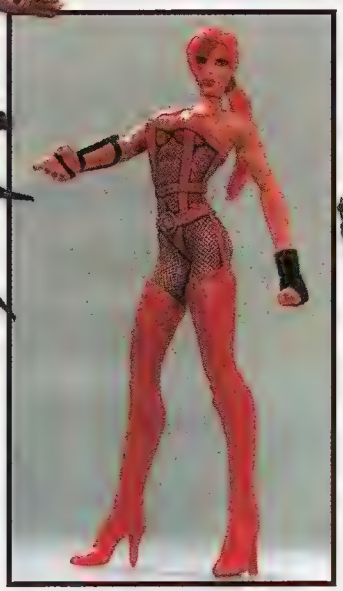
TOY CHEST

CRIMSON AND CLOVER

Cliffhanger fans better hang on to toy shelves this fall! First, McFarlane Toys announced its line of Danger Girl toys this summer, and now Dynamic Forces is joining the action with a full assortment of action figures based on Humberto Ramos' ***Crimson***. Aside from being sculpted in Ramos' unique style, these four figures will be fully articulated. So who's made the jump from comic book page to the toy rack? Howabout **Alex**, **Joe**, **Scarlet** and **Lisseth**? Look for these bad boys at comic book shops this December.

Now if only someone would make Battle Chasers toys...





RED-HOT TOYS Crimson comic fans now have Crimson toys (clockwise from right): Alex, Joe, Scarlet and Lisseth.

BLOODS BY PAUL SCHUBALIN; CRIMSON PHOTOS COURTESY OF DYNAMIC FORCES; MARVEL PHOTOS COURTESY OF DIAMOND.

BY TOM PALMER JR.

Batman Beyond figures...& more Gen13 dolls!

MARVEL MADNESS!

Worried about the recent drought of Marvel toys? Have no fear, true believer!

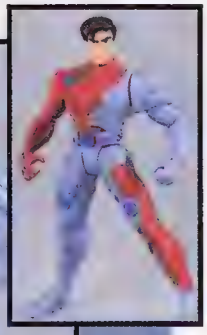
Toy Biz has recently teamed up with Diamond Comic Distributors for a whole mess of new Marvel toys that will run the gamut from current faves like MC2 to old classics like Gwen Stacey. First up this September is a pair of Marvel History Greatest Moments two-packs, which include **Bullseye** and **Elektra** form *Daredevil* #181 and **Dark Phoenix** and **Cyclops** from *Uncanny X-Men* #137. And if that's not enough, you can also trot down to your local comic shop to pick up a 9-inch Famous Covers **Spider-Girl** figure, which features a brand-new head sculpt and a removable cloth costume. Hubba-hubba!

And in other Marvel news, Toy Biz announced its plans for the first toys to tie in to this fall's new "Avengers" cartoon. By year's end, there will be two assortments totaling 10 figures, including **Ant-Man**, **Wonder Man**, **Wasp**, **Tigra**, **Vision**, **Falcon**, **Hawkeye**, **Ultron** and two fan-requested mystery figures. Keep your eyes peeled in coming months for pics of these cool figures!

MARVEL REVOLUTION Can this be the start of something big? Check out the Marvel History Greatest Moments two-packs (top): Bullseye and Elektra and Dark Phoenix and Cyclops. And don't forget the Famous Covers Spider-Girl figure (bottom)!

BAT STUFF

For Batman, the future's looking very bright. The new animated series "Batman Beyond" is a huge success, and Hasbro's colorful toy line has been a hit with fans as well. Naturally, the toy company has planned out a follow-up to its first wave of Batman Beyond toys, which will feature several new Bat-variations along with a brand-new villain. This second helping of Batman Beyond stuff will include **Power Armor Batman** (with a removable helmet to reveal Terry McGinnis beneath and Cyber-Falcon), **Radio Rage Blight** (which features a translucent deco and a Nuclear Blaster and Curse Missile), **Hydro Force Batman** (with an Aqua Torpedo and a camouflage paint scheme) and **Sonic Boom Batman** (with a Thruster Cape and Dual Wing Blaster). Look for these guys in toy stores nationwide later this summer.



BEYOND TOYS Batman goes futuristic with (clockwise from top left): Sonic Boom Batman, Radio Rage Blight, Power Armor Batman (with unmasked Terry McGinnis inset) and Hydro Force Batman.

HOMEMADE HEROES OF THE MONTH

THE BEST OF FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES

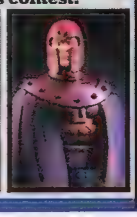
JULIE (FROM 'THE MAXX')

Adam Willich, Springfield, Penn.

Hmmm...is The Maxx still being published? No matter–Adam made this here nifty Julie figure from a McFarlane Toys Angela, with a little bit of Sculpey to flesh out her...uh, proportions.

For all his hard work, Adam wins a vicious looking Red Skull bust signed by Randy Bowen!

Abe Sapian and Magneto mini-bust prototypes signed by Randy Bowen. Thanks to Bowen Designs for sponsoring this months contest.



Hey!

Do you want in on the fun? To enter the homemade figure contest, send at least TWO well-lit, clear, color photographs (No Polaroids, and put 'em in cool or funny poses!), along with your name, address, a DETAILED DESCRIPTION of how you created your figure, your full phone number (including area code) and even e-mail address to:

HOMEMADE HEROES
c/o Wizard Entertainment
P.O. Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

GENERATION TOYS

What could be better than big dolls with removable clothes? Howabout *two* of 'em?

After the success of its recent 12-inch Fairchild and Lynch figures, Diamond Comic Distributors is going back to the Gen[13] well this September. Next up on the plate are **Rainmaker** and **Burnout**, both of which feature 14 points of articulation and removable cloth costumes. Could the rest of the Gen[13] crew be far behind? Only time will tell...

LUCKY DAY The Gen13 kids get lucky and go plastic this fall with Rainmaker and that whiny, now-dead bastard Burnout.

BATMAN PHOTOS COURTESY OF HASBRO, GEN13 PHOTOS COURTESY OF DIAMOND

THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN!

We are a progressive, leading-edge company located in Southern California. Our growth and success has created an amazing opportunity.

PRODUCT MANAGER

Collectible/Fantasy Card Games

In this exciting role, you will develop a comprehensive business plan to manage our entry into the Collectible/ Fantasy Card Game category. We will rely on your expertise to recommend new product opportunities, secure licenses, and manage development. Using your proven creative, innovative thinking you will develop product themes, content, and business solutions. In addition, you will review and evaluate all competitive Collectible/Fantasy Card Game products and establish/maintain key industry contacts.

Your 3+ years of successful licensed marketing and product management experience and proven track record of developing and managing products in the Collectible/Fantasy Card Game category are crucial to this position.

A Bachelor's in Business, Marketing, or equivalent (MBA preferred) and strong knowledge of budgeting and product P&L's are required. Excellent communication skills with the ability to present and "sell" ideas to senior management and licensing partners/agents are essential. Must be a team player with the ability to lead cross-functional project teams while handling multiple, high-priority projects.

We offer a stimulating work environment, competitive salaries and a comprehensive benefits package. Please send your resume and salary history to: BHA Confidential Reply, Attn: AB/WIZARD, 4180 La Jolla Village Dr., Suite 245, San Diego, CA 92037. Fax: 858/ 658-9710. EOE.

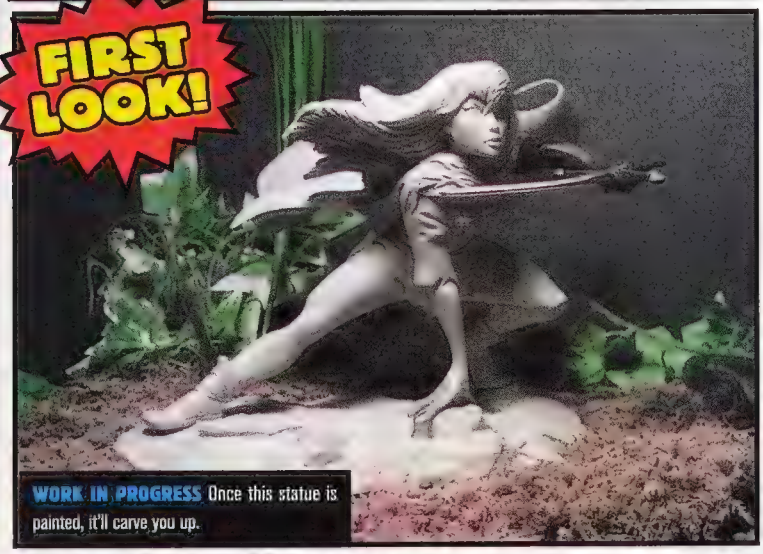
stuff

COMIC BOOK MERCHANDISE YOU CAN BUY...

By David Borak and the *Wizard* staff

AVAILABLE AT YOUR LOCAL COMICS RETAILER

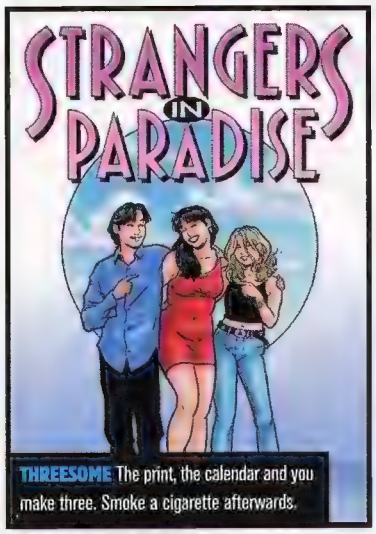
Who doesn't like stuff? Whether it's Robotman's High-Octane Energy Drink, Thor's Tool Kit or the Teen Titans Benzoil Peroxide Ointment, we're all suckers for comic-related merchandise. Each month, *Wizard* strives to show you the latest and super-neatest in comic book statues, posters, pins, magnets, shirts and other goodies.



WORK IN PROGRESS Once this statue is painted, it'll carve you up.

THORNY BEAUTY

Cartoon Books presents a fully painted, limited-edition statue of that *Bone* babe, Thorn! Sculpted by Tony Cipriano, based on designs by creator Jeff Smith and animator Jennifer Oliver and measuring in at 6 1/2 inches tall, the Warrior Thorn Limited Edition Cold-Cast Statue ($124.95) is made of cold-cast porcelain with Thorn's arm and sword sculpted in real pewter! Limited to just 1,500 statues, it'll be available in November.



THREESOME The print, the calendar and you make three. Smoke a cigarette afterwards.

LIVIN' IN PARADISE

Abstract Studio presents the Strangers in Paradise Special Art Print ($25) and the Strangers in Paradise 2000 Calendar ($12.95) to liven up your walls. Available in September, the 12" X 18" full-color SiP print features a new illustration by creator Terry Moore of Katchoo, Francine and David. In October, look for the 10 1/2" X 16 1/2" SiP 2000 Calendar, which comes with 12 brand-new, full-color pictures of the whole SiP gang.

A-HUNTING FOR A STATUE

Based on designs by artist Walter Simonson and sculpted by William Paquet, the Manhunter Medium Statue ($89.95) from DC measures 4 1/2" tall, 5 1/2" wide and 5 1/2" deep. It features Paul Kirk, the big-game hunter turned superhero from the All-Star Squadron, with a gun in one hand and a bundi dagger in the other. This cold-cast porcelain statue will be available January 26.

TOUGH GUY Indiana Jones got nothin' on this DC classic hero. And Manny likes snakes.

CROSS THE BRIDGE ...into the realm of spectacular art by Vess.

DUSTIN' STARS

Charles Vess' own Green Man Press offers the limited-edition Stardust Print Set, a collection of prints from the best-selling *Stardust* illustrated novel written by Neil Gaiman and illustrated by Vess. Three 14 1/2" X 17" prints come packaged in a blue leatherette box with a silver-foil-stamped exterior. Each print is signed and numbered. The set is $150 plus $20 shipping, and purchasers may buy up to nine more limited prints for $50 each. Go to www.greenmanpress.com or call (540) 623-0796.

BUSTED MAGNET

Bowen Designs presents the latest in their line of Marvel mini-busts—it's the master of magnetism, Magneto! The Magneto Mini-Bust ($30) stands 5 1/2" tall and features an angry-looking Magneto with helmet and cape. Made from cold-cast porcelain, the arch X-foe comes fully painted in a collector's box. Look for it this September.

STEELY EYES This bust will lead all other mutant busts on a quest for glory...and appendages.

HOT STUFF!!!!!!!!

PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

BANK ON THIS GIANT

Based on the new animated movie, Trendmasters presents the Iron Giant Bank ($19.99). The 11"-tall bank features the metal-eating robot sitting on a junkyard with a li'l Hogarth figure affixed to its knee. Iron Giant will eat the coins you place in his hands! Plus, the Giant's eyes light up, and he has moving arms, hands and legs on top of his crunching jaw. Oh, yeah–he smashes a car with his foot! Look for it this September.

IRON MAN Eats whatever an Iron Giant can–like your money!

A DOLL TO DIE FOR

Slave Labor Graphics presents the Lenore Stuffed Doll ($19.95) from the new series *Lenore* by Roman Dirge. The 9" Lenore doll features everyone's favorite little dead girl, along with a little dead kitty that you can take off and play with, too! Production is limited to just 5,000 dolls—look for 'em now.

NEED...COFFEE "Mommyyyyy, my dolly's dead!!!"

SING ALONG WITH BATS BEYOND

Bring home the hard-edged music from the hit WB show "Batman Beyond" with Rhino Audio's Batman Beyond Soundtrack CD ($13.98). It features a mix of industrial rock, club-influenced drum & bass, techno, and house music—all to evoke the world of the futuristic Batman. It's available in record stores this month.

MUSIC TO FIGHT BY But can you dance to it?

POCKETFUL OF KRYPTONITE

This January, look for the Kryptonite Prop ($149.95), which features a 5-inch-high piece of kryptonite (it's actually clear resin painted green). It rests on a circular, gold-colored, cold-cast, porcelain base that's inscribed with the Superman S-shield and warning phrases in English and Kryptonian. A clear, removable 7"-tall glass dome covers the kryptonite—remove it, and the rock glows green! It's limited to just 3,000 pieces.

DANGER, CLARK KENT Keep this in a lead box in your Fortress of Solitude.

A DAMNED KEY

Straight from the pages of *Sandman: Season of Mists*, DC presents the Key to Hell Prop for $99.95. You heard right—this cold-cast, porcelain key reproduces the key that will let you into the underworld. The 3 1/2" X 9" key rests on a detachable base that measures 4" X 3 1/4" and is packaged with a certificate of authenticity. Look for it December 15.

SKELETON KEY Now you can get into Bob Harras' office.

THE PRIME DIRECTIVE ...is to get as much dough as you can. And to bag that Seven of Nine chick.

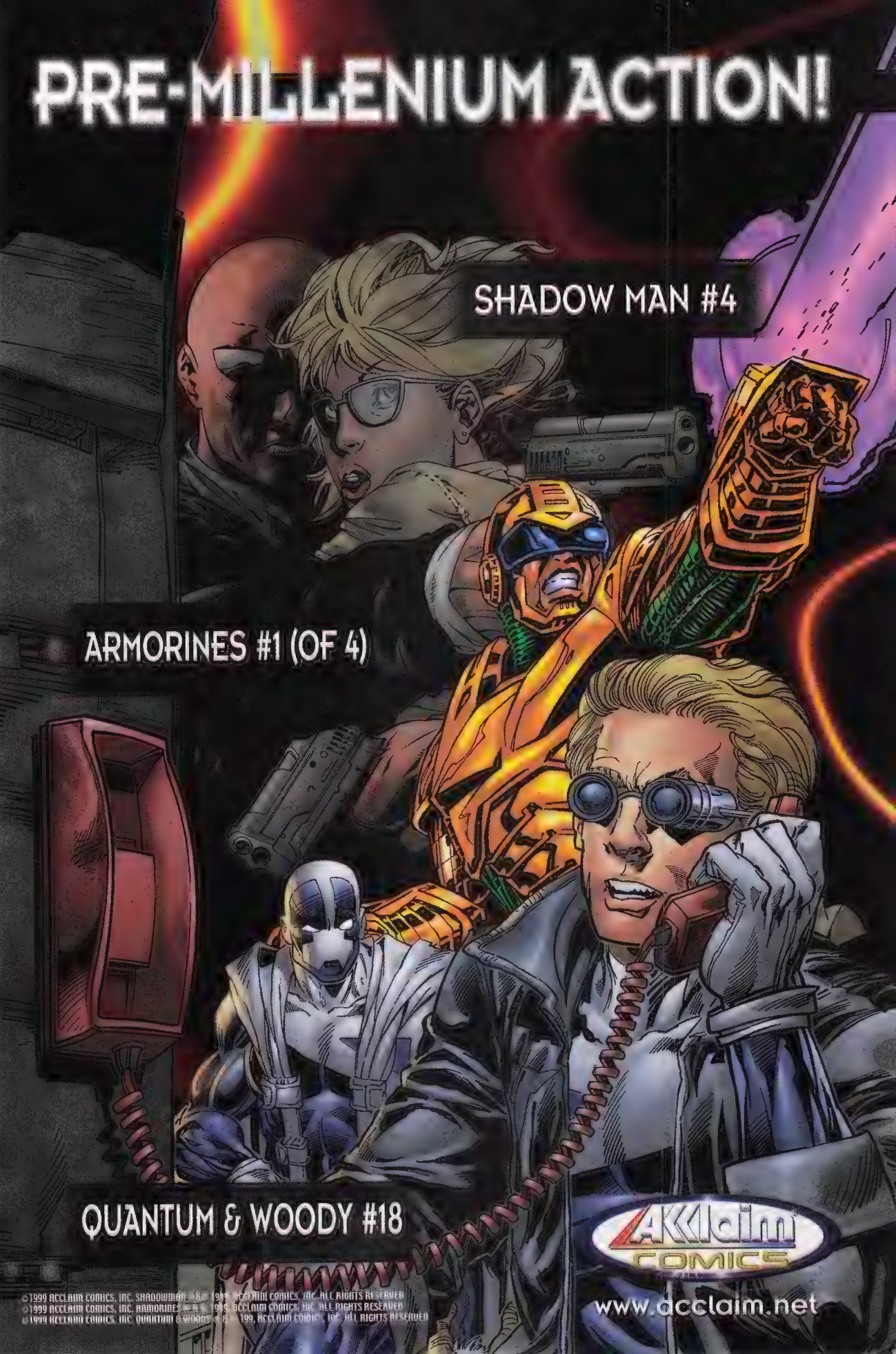
WHEEL AND DEAL IN SPACE

USAOPOLY presents the newest version of Monopoly with the Star Trek: The Next Generation Collector's Edition ($50). Houses and hotels are now starships and starbases, and the game pieces are collectible pewter tokens of the *Enterprise* crew. Each game is individually numbered with a certificate of authenticity. Look for it in stores now or call (888) 656-7306.

Check your local stores for availability of all these funky-fresh products. Or ask your friendly neighborhood comic store to special order 'em for ya!

YO! Are you a company who sells stuff cool enough to make the grade here? Let us be the judges of that. Send any info/or samples to:

Stuff for "Stuff"
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064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QUANTUM & WOODY #18
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video STUFF

By Matthew Danish and the *Wizard* Staff

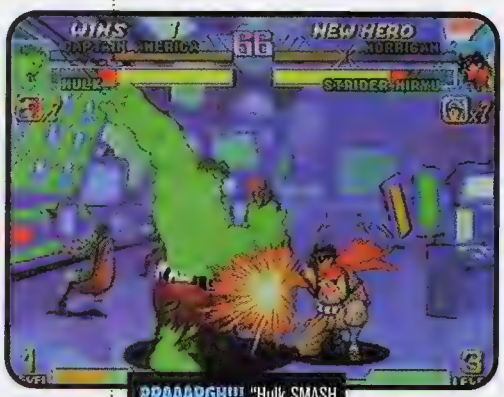
What? Do you need us to draw a picture? We took a bunch of video games, locked ourselves away and played 'em 'til our thumbs fell off. We don't pretend to be experts, just fun-lovin' folks who like our salsa spicy, our couch cushy and our video games kick-ass...here's what floated our boat, or not.

DREAMING OF MARVEL VS. CAPCOM

Hold on to your joysticks, Marvel fans!

Sega announced that the Dreamcast version of *Marvel vs. Capcom*, already available in Japan, should appear in U.S. stores in the fall of 1999. Just like in the popular arcade version, players will be able to choose from characters like Wolverine, Gambit, the Incredible Hulk and Apocalypse as they compete in head-to-head battles against friends or the computer.

The game will include a new four-player battle mode in which a pair of two-player teams duke it out and it will also feature helper attacks. Helper characters, like Jubilee and Cyclops or Arthur from *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* and the Unknown Soldier from *Forgotten Worlds*, can be called out for surprise attacks during gameplay. If the Japanese version of the game is any indication, the new *Marvel vs. Capcom* will be a near-perfect arcade translation with exhilarating combo attacks and very little screen slowdown or load time.



RRAAARGH!!! "Hulk SMASH puny Capcom man!!"

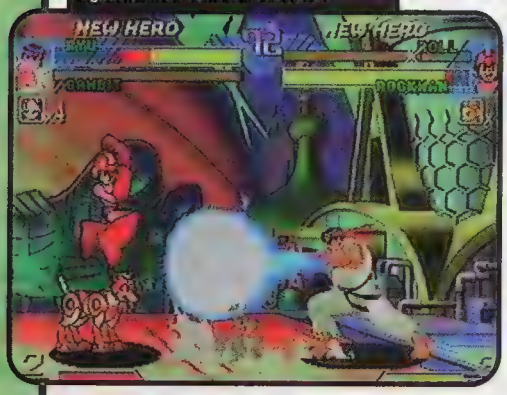
GET BIT!

Time to break out those fake plastic fangs and dust off that snappy black cloak.

Nihilistic Software is currently at work on *Vampire the Masquerade: Redemption*, a classic vampire PC game set to be released in November. In this dark, gothic game set in medieval Prague, players assume the role of a noble knight named Christof who is wracked with moral dilemmas after being transformed by a vampire's bite.

In true roleplaying game style, the game contains magic spells, an every-evolving party, dark cityscapes and a host of choices to be made. The game will also reportedly include a game master feature in which online players will act in a role similar to the dungeon master in classic *Dungeons & Dragons* games. In addition, the game will have a multi-player option where players assume the roles of other characters in Christof's party.

HUH?!?! Uhhh, what the hell is Ryu doing fighting Muffet from "Battlestar Galactica"?



SOLID SEQUEL ...SORTA

If you can't get enough *Metal Gear*, the wait is over. Almost...

To tide fans over until the next installment in the popular action series, Konami will release *Metal Gear Solid VR Missions* in October. The game features a new set of over 300 military adventure scenarios similar to the training sessions in the mega-successful *Metal Gear Solid*, each of which must be completed once again by the hero, Solid Snake. With gameplay similar to the original, *VR Missions* offers familiar weapons and devices and even includes a scenario based on a murder mystery theme. ■

UP AHEAD

Shina, Queen of the Jungle...Crea
someone to do yer dirty work...an
Monkeys on the loose! WHEEEEE!

THE MAGNIFICENT ONE

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BLOODY ROAR II

MANUFACTURER: Hudson Soft
PLATFORM: Sony PlayStation
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $44.95, available now

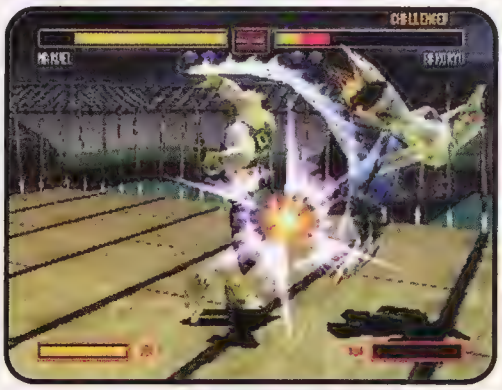
Hudson's *Bloody Roar II* may just be one of the best fighting games ever.

What makes this game so cool? Well, you get to choose from characters like Yugo the Wolf, Long the Tiger, Shina the Leopard, Busuzima the Chameleon or Stun the Insect. Each character has its own set of attacks, aside from the typical punches and kicks, but as the fight progresses, your Beast Gauge charges up. When your character gets fully charged, you can morph him into his animal alter ego and unleash all sorts of carnage. In addition, there are rage moves that can rattle even the toughest opponent, but unfortunately burn out your time in animal form.

Of course, this game includes both single- and multi-player modes, but it also has a story mode where more and more of a character's background story is revealed after each victory. You can also play in a mode that is a perfect emulation of the arcade version of *Bloody Roar II* or a survival mode where you try to take down the most opponents with only one life. Or if you don't feel like playing at all, you can put the game in watch mode and sit back and let the computer fight. Time limits can be adjusted along with difficulty levels and each fighter's attack power.

TRY IT... Are you a *Mortal Kombat* fan? Then check out this game!

With great graphics, an awesome fight engine and so many cool features, *Bloody Roar II* is well worth your hard-earned scratch. ■



YOWWWW If you don't watch yourself, you'll be handed a bloody melon.

FIGHTER MAKER

MANUFACTURER: Agetec
PLATFORM: Sony Playstation
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $44.95, available now

Bored of all the same old fighting games? Well, now there's a way to take control of your combat.

Fighter Maker is a one-of-a-kind game that allows you to start from scratch and build your own fighter. There are basically two games in one: a basic fighting game with preprogrammed combatants and an edit feature that enables players to create their own fighters. The fighting features of this game are fairly basic, but the real star is the editing mode. While you can't customize the game's main characters, everything about your scratch-built warrior is programmable, from their combat moves right down to their physical appearance. You can choose how your character will smack around or take down opponents and even create the pose your guy will take when he wins a fight. Fighting moves are assembled frame-by-frame from over 800 choices and characters can be saved to memory cards and played alongside the game's standard warriors.

Even though the customization features are tough to handle at first, the rewards of this game are definitely well worth it. *Fighter Maker* offers limitless possibilities and hours of play. With moves drawn from various combat disciplines like kickboxing, wrestling and boxing, and the ability to even mimic a movie fighter's style, *Fighter Maker* will surely take standard fighting games to new levels. ■

TRY IT... Sick of the same old fighting game? Pick up *Fighter Maker* and start dukin' it out your own way!

RENT IT!!! The game's the best thing since "My Bodyguard," where this dweeb hires a Baldwin brother to protect his sorry ass!

MORE→

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THE OFFICIAL DUKE NUKEM ALBUM

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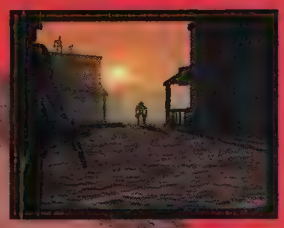

COME GET SOME!

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APE ESCAPE

MANUFACTURER: Sony Computer Entertainment
PLATFORM: Sony Playstation
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $44.95, available now

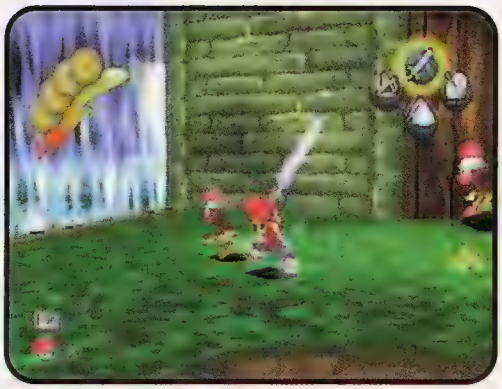
Holy cow! The apes are on the loose!

Believe it or not, playing *Ape Escape* might actually be more fun than a barrel of monkeys. The basic premise of this game, which is one of the first to make full use of the PlayStation's dual-shock analog controllers, involves capturing escaped monkeys and returning them to the amusement park. *Ape Escape* features more than 20 huge 3-D levels—including an underwater board—and all sorts of monkey hijinks! How cool is that?!

True to the game's wacky concept, *Ape Escape* features strange weapons and gadgets like a stun club to knock apes out of commission and a remote-controlled car to chase apes. Each level provides multiple puzzles, and there are also mini-games hidden throughout the game—collect enough hidden coins and you can buy your way into an ape shooting gallery or an ape-themed boxing game. While *Ape Escape* sounds like all-out fun, be warned that the game won't work at all without those funky analog controllers.

TRY IT... Got monkey fever? Can't get enough bananas? Go grab *Ape Escape*!

Ape Escape has a nice, simple and addictive gameplay that's made all the better by great graphics and neat gadgets. No doubt about it, this game is packed full of fun. Buy *Ape Escape*, grab a net and start catching some apes! ■



FREEEEEEDOMMMMM! *Ape Escape* is not to be confused with "Escape From the Planet of the Apes," with Ricardo Montalban.

CHEATSHEET

SPECIAL MOVES & SECRET CODES

BLOODY ROAR II

Got the animal rage? Check out these tricks to make all those hours playing *Bloody Roar II* even more enjoyable:

- To play as Shen Long, go to arcade mode, beat the game without continuing. When you defeat Shen Long, he will become a selectable character and you can also choose his special stage.
- To play as Gado, simply beat the arcade mode. (You can, however, use as many continues as necessary).
- To access all of the game's movies, you must beat the story mode with every character at difficulty L4 or higher.
- To access the character's fourth costume, beat arcade or story mode using no continues. When choosing a character, press start to reveal their extra costume.
- For an easy rage attack, press back, triangle and circle at the same time while in animal form and the attack will be launched.

webline

IT CAME FROM THE WORLD WIDE WEB

atarihq.com/othersec/library/celebs.html
A collection of famous celebrities' thoughts on video games.

iscool.net/popup.html
Check out these totally weird PC games, like *Ganja Farmer*, where you're a farmer desperately trying to protect your crop from the Man.

top25.com/emu/index.html
Turn your PC into an N64, PlayStation, Atari 2600 and even a Commodore 64 with this cool emulation site.

www.scifi.com/index.html
This site's got everything sci-fi: news, entertainment, movie reviews and more!

www.owo.com
Get the skinny on online roleplaying games and trace the origins of the fantasy world of *Ultima Online*.

www.zealot.com/features/archives/jarjartorture
Finally, an interactive Web site where Internet surfers can actually kill Jar Jar Binks in numerous ways! So purge that inner demon and hop to it! ■

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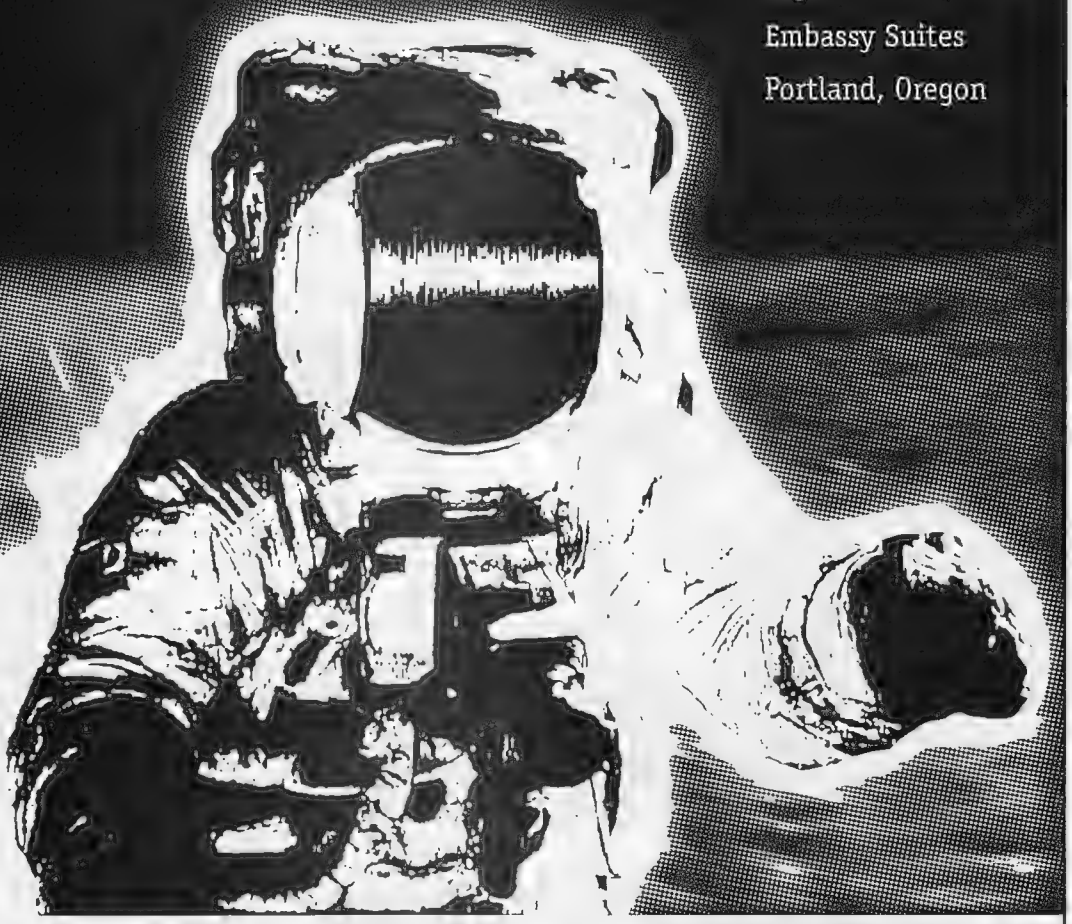

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For one month only, *Wizard* jumps forward with *Wizard 2000*.
This month's *Wizard* features a fantastic look at the future of comics and much much more.
Wizard: The Comics Magazine returns in December with *Wizard* #100, The Century Ender.

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manga MANIA!

COOL JAPANESE COMIC AND ANIMATION STUFF YOU'LL WANT TO BUY...

Hey, it's time for another round of imported anime and manga swag from Japan! But hang on and remember two things: All manga is in black and white unless we tell ya different, and all of these items are September-shipping products unless otherwise noted. Oh, yeah, and you can get all these neat products at your local retailer. Okie-dokie? Good! Now let's dive into the Japanese jamboree!

BY TOM ROOT

PARTY LIKE IT'S 999.9

After giant meteors destroy most of the world, beware of those mysterious military organizations—they tend to rise to power in a hurry. And that doesn't make the survivors all that happy in "DNA Sights 999.9," a 50-minute anime release from Urban Vision Entertainment. In fact, one survivor, Tetsuro Daiba, has special powers that just might be enough to take down the entire evil new regime! Available now for $19.95 dubbed, $29.95 subtitled.

GENE SPLICING Power to reshape the world; power to have a long neck.

BOSOM BUDDIES Guys dress as girls to find the Claire Bible? Uh...ookay.

BIBLE THUMPIN'

Everybody wants the valuable Claire Bible, and we mean *everybody*. The trouble is, it's in the kingdom of Femille, where there are no men allowed—under penalty of death! In the new anime "Slayers Next Vol. 6: Secret of the Giga Slave" and "Vol. 7: Death of the Devil Dragon," both from Central Park Media, Gourry, Zelgadis and Xellos must stay disguised as women or face the chopping block! Each video is $19.99 dubbed or subtitled (gotta love that pricing policy, folks!) and runs 75 minutes. Uh, Gourry, who taught you how to put on lipstick?

manga MANIA!

STALK THIS Maybe being bitten by a vampire ain't so bad. No, we're not talking to you, Tom Cruise.

SOME 'NIGHT' READING

You've played the video game *Night Warriors: Darkstalkers' Revenge* from Capcom, now read all about the characters in the graphic novel *Night Warriors: Darkstalkers' Revenge* from Viz Comics. What happens when vampire prince Demitri wakes up? How does 6-foot-tall catwoman Felicia handle everyday existence in human society? For $15.95, you can read all 168 pages and find out for yourself.

JUMP! If the aliens don't get ya, the David Lee Roth memories will.

GET HYPER

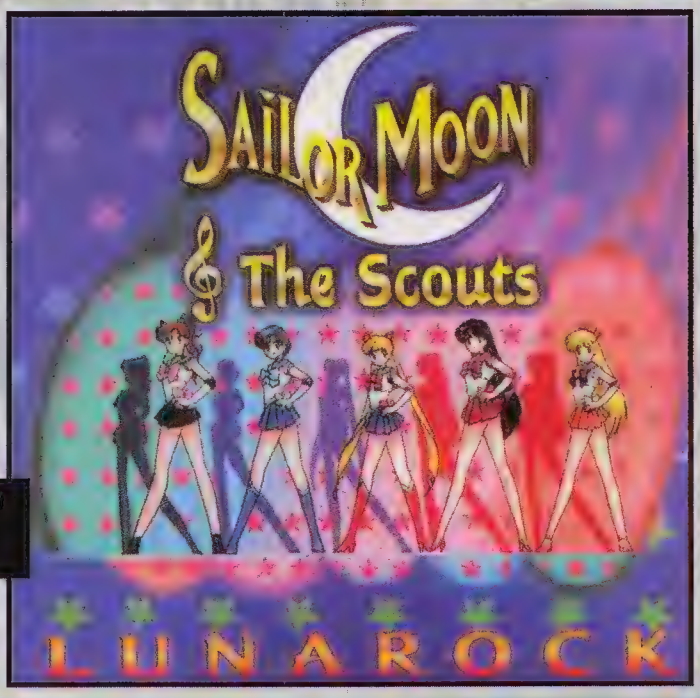
Hmm...study for a test, or keep the world safe from alien attackers? Why not do both? That's the life of Miyu and Maika, the Hyper Dolls, on a daily basis. In *Hyper Dolls Vol. 3* #1, the first ish of a monthly manga from Studio Ironcat, see why some pizza toppings, like pepperoni, are really tasty, while other toppings, like alien commanders, are not! It's 32 pages of truly bizarre stuff like that for $2.95.

HOTIMPORT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

THE BESTEST THING COMING ACROSS THE PACIFIC

SINGING SAILORS

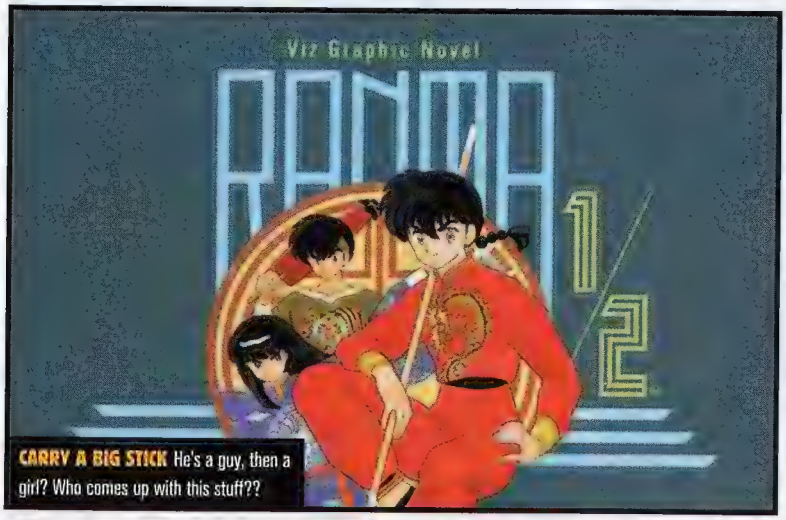
Sailor Moon & the Scouts sing a little song, do a little dance and generally get down on the album "Lunarock." The girls from the popular anime show (or actually, the singers who adopt the roles of the series' principal characters) serve up hot, infectious techno pop in both English *and* Japanese. Available in music stores right now, it'll cost you $16.98 to hear the girls sing the Lennon/McCartney classic "I Want to Hold Your Hand" and seven other tunes. From Rhino.



GIRL POWER Dump that Spice Girls disc and snatch up the Sailor Moon tunes of these bilingual babes.

HAIR APPARENT

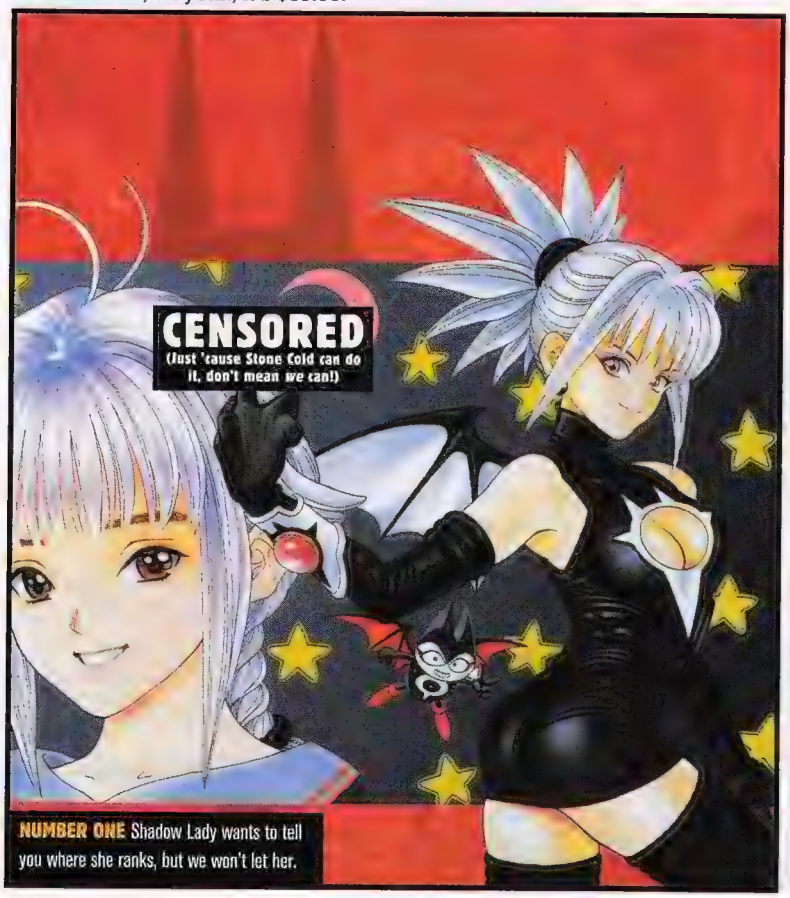
Ever wonder why sometimes-a-boy, sometimes-a-girl martial artist Ranma always wears that braided pigtail? That's because it's held together with the mythical "Dragon's Whisker"—and now four Chinese warriors are here to take it away! Find out the secret of the Dragon's Whisker in the *Ranma 1/2 Vol. 14 Graphic Novel* from Viz Comics. It's 184 pages and $15.95. Yappa pa, yappa pa!



CARRY A BIG STICK He's a guy, then a girl? Who comes up with this stuff??

MAKEUP SHAKEUP

Most of the time, eye shadow makes you nice and pretty. Rarely does eye shadow turn you into Shadow Lady, the master thief! But it actually does happen, especially when you're Aimi Komori in *Masakazu Katsura's Shadow Lady—Dangerous Love*, a 200-page trade paperback from Dark Horse. Gray City, beware! And, oh yeah, it's $17.95.



NUMBER ONE Shadow Lady wants to tell you where she ranks, but we won't let her.

Goodbye Tenchi?

TENCHI *forever!*

After a fight with the girls, Tenchi goes off into the mountains and never returns. By the time Ayeka and Ryoko find him, he doesn't seem to recognize them, and he has moved in with another woman! Grampa's past and Tenchi's future collide in this beautifully animated finale to Tenchi Muyo!

English VHS - $19.98
Subtitled VHS - $24.98
Dual Language DVD - $29.98
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manga MANIA!

TWO FOR ONE Get one gun-wielding babe, get the second free!

DOUBLE-DIRTY

When a top trouble consultant tries his luck at the casino and ends up getting swept away to the dark side, who ya gonna call? Kei and Yuri, the Dirty Pair, that's who! In their latest ADVision anime installment, "Original Dirty Pair Vol. 3," those lovely angels are off to win big against evil—if they don't accidentally blow up the planet with their asteroid-busting rail gun first! The video is available for $19.98 dubbed or $29.95 subtitled, and it's 60 minutes of destructive fun.

A.M.P.-LIFIED

Ladies and gentlemen, allow us to introduce the A.M.P.! That's Abnormal Mystery Police, for those of you not in the know—six gals with super (and psychic) powers who combat all the spooky ghoulies that A.D. 2026 Tokyo has to offer. Can they hold back the evil onslaught? Find out in the *Silent Möbius Vol. 3 Graphic Novel* from superstar artist Kia Asamiya. It's $16.95 from Viz Comics.

AMPLE PROTECTION Six police chicks with superpowers? Let's break the law!

NICE FACE No wonder this guy gets into a lotta fights.

TWO-FISTED FUN!

Who's ready for spine-ripping, skull-crushing action in the mighty "Fist of the North Star" manner? Hokuto No Ken is back to deliver the queasifying violence in volume 4 of the smash-hit Japanese TV series. Find out what happens when Ken, the North Star, must square off against Shin...the *South* Star! Now, if your mom catches you watching it, tell her it's some educational Civil War re-enactment. If she asks you why there's so much blood, tell her that war is hell! We oughtta know. Every time some young punk flashes an issue of *G.I. Joe*, it all comes back...painfully. Manga Video's got the 90-minute release for $19.95 dubbed, $24.95 subtitled. Available now.

YO! Are you a company who sells manga- and anime-related stuff cool enough to make the grade here? Let us be the judges of that. Send any info and/or samples to:

"Manga Mania"
c/o Wizard Entertainment
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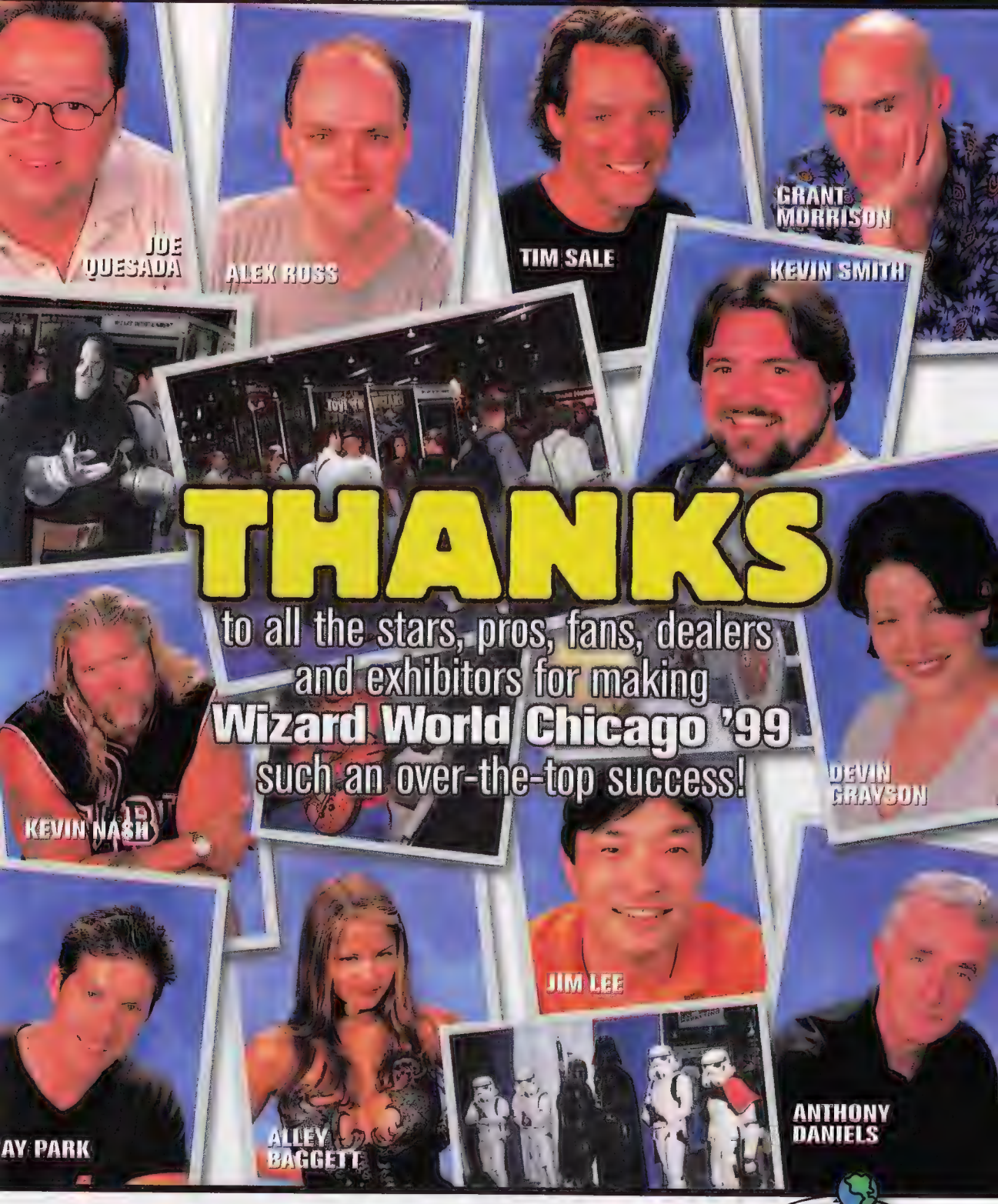

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WIZARD WORLD CHICAGO 2000

WIZARD WORLD ALL PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

TOP 10 HEROES & VILLAINS

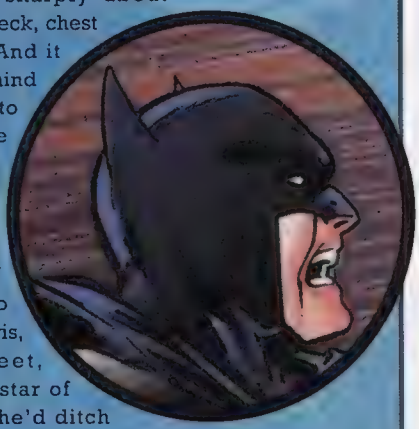
This list doesn't track the number of copies which a specific character sells each month. It doesn't pay attention to any kind of sales meter. This list is a roster of the 10 comic book characters with the strongest fan following—nothing more, nothing less.

1 WOLVERINE

If everyone loves the crazy guy, then Wolvie must be feelin' the love! He's downright loopy! First, he's Canadian. That's nuts enough to get you committed in 49 states (Delaware being the exception) right off the bat. Then there's the fact that when Wolvie got the adamantium sucked offa his bones, he went bonkers and ran through the woods with a diaper on his head. And now, since Charlie Xavier wouldn't let him kill Magneto, Wolvie's nuts enough to break up the X-Men like he was some latter-day Yoko Ono. Put it all together and it spells "cuckoo." And in comics, "cuckoo" means "love."

2 BATMAN

Psychologists and other big-brain guys try to feed us this crap that heroes of fiction are defined by the villains they confront. Phooey. Batman is cool because he kicks ass, breaks ribs, punctures spleens, and generally raps bad guys sharply about the face, breast, neck, chest and head area. And it makes no nevermind if he's doin' this to the Joker or the Ventriloquist—Batman's just flat-out cool. Of course, it would be even *cooler* if Batman were to beat up Huey Lewis, saccharine-sweet, cheeseball pop star of the '80s. And if he'd ditch that "don't kill" policy when he's smackin' on Huey.

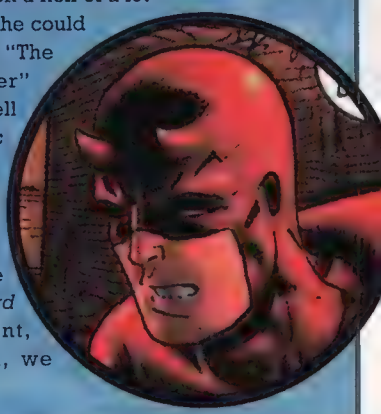


3 THOR

Thor, bein' the hammer-swingin', lightnin'-strikin', Avenger-assemblin' god of thunder that he is, is a pretty busy guy. Drummin' Loki's ass into the dirt and keeping the world safe for Norwegians is a full-time job, y'know. So Thor has several little-known helpers. The Lady Sif keeps Thor's hammer, the sacred Mjolnir, in good repair. Heimdall, guardian of the Rainbow Bridge, repairs his costume when need be. But there's one thing no one can figure out: Who makes sure Thor's headgear remains nice and shiny? Or to put it another way, who polishes Thor's helmet? Hmmm? Comicdom collected wants ta know!

4 DAREDEVIL

Daredevil's a pretty intelligent guy. Hey, he's got a law degree and everything to prove it. But one thing he's missing the smart boat on? Choice of weapons. If he were to just take that billy club of his and drive a few nails through it, he'd have a more ass-kicking weapon that would look a hell of a lot cooler to boot! Then he could give it a name like "The Kingpin Tenderizer" or sumpthin' and sell knockoffs to comic geeks and street thugs alike! Yeah! Merchandising—that's where it's at, baby! He'd make *millions!* Just cut *Wizard* in for 10 percent, Hornhead. After all, we gave ya the idea.



5 SPAWN

Spawn has green eyes. So does David Hasselhoff. Spawn has a comic read in 70 countries around the world. Hasselhoff's "Baywatch" is seen in 117 nations. Spawn's face is a crusty, burned mess. Hasselhoff's is kept nice 'n' pretty with thousands of dollars worth of plastic surgery. Spawn hangs with bums in an alley. Hasselhoff parties with busty bikini blondes who run in slow motion. Hey! What the hell is Spawn doin' on this list, anyhoo? Get David Hasselhoff in here!

6 FATHOM

Speaking of busty bikini blondes, we proudly present their lovely cousin—the busty bikini brunette—in the form of one Aspen Matthews, a.k.a. Fathom. And whatta form it is! See, that Michael Turner guy who draws *Fathom* loves his work. He studies the female form at "research facilities" with names like "Bare Elegance" and "Club Paradise." The end result? You get a better comic, and Turner gets to write all this off on his taxes. God bless America!

7 ULTRON

Two things we know about comics. One: Evil is cool. Two: Robots are cool. That means evil robots are DOUBLE cool! And two plus one in this case equals Ultron. The nasty-bad Avengers villain has just blown up the nation of Wakanda, and rumor has it he's plannin' to jump outta the bushes and scare the piss out of little kids this Halloween. *That's* evil! Now if we could get Ultron to grind up Jar Jar Binks in some kinda evil, robot death machine, we'd *really* be talkin'!

8 CAPTAIN AMERICA

Captain America is so damned popular, he's the symbol of an entire nation. And being a national symbol is a pretty cool job, unless the nation in question happens to be Butt Land or France or some place like that. Fortunately, Steve Rogers lucked out and drew the Captain *America* slot. So when he's done whuppin' the Red Skull's butt, he can sit down to a nice slice of apple pie afterwards. Now what's more American than stomping ass and eating pie?

9 POET

If you're gonna be a poet, at least be a cool poet. Recommendations: Be the lead character in *Rising Stars*, the new hit series by "Babylon 5" creator J. Michael Straczynski. Have some cool and massively destructive powers. And make sure to always put the toilet seat down when you're done. This Poet does all that, and it *definitely* gets him more chicks than one of them flitty English poet guys with a frilly shirt and knack for making rhymes.

10 TOM STRONG

If you were Tom Strong, you'd be big, you'd be tough, you'd be smart, you'd marry some hot island chick, you'd have a talking gorilla sidekick, *and* you'd be written by Alan Moore. Out in the real world, the first four things listed above would make you a respected member of society. But since you're a comic geek, all you probably care about are the last two. But at least you could brag about it to your pimply friends on "Magic" night at the Dragon's Den.

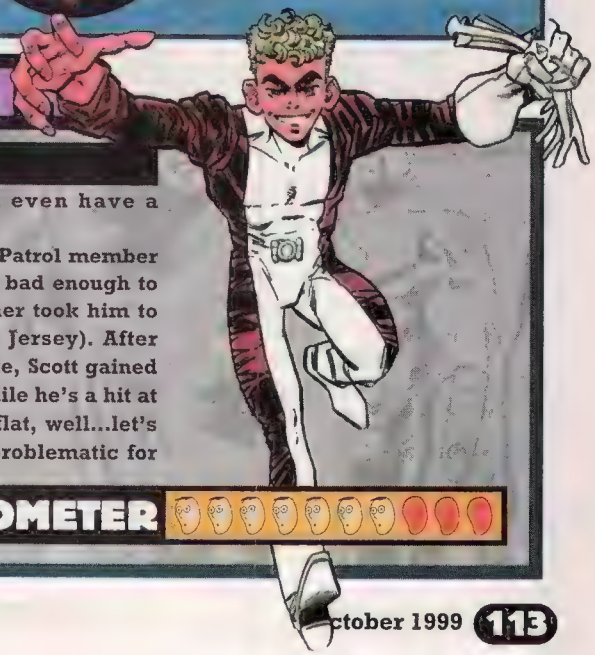
MORT OF THE MONTH

ONE LAME-ASS CHARACTER

SCOTT FISCHER

Meet Scott Fischer, the Mort so lame he doesn't even have a superhero-y name!

And that's hardly the worst indignity that this DC Doom Patrol member suffered. For starters, he grew up in New Jersey. That's bad enough to traumatize *anyone* for life. Then at 4 years old, his father took him to play in a toxic waste dump (trust us—they're all over Jersey). After drinking some yummy-nummy-for-the-tummy toxic waste, Scott gained the power to generate intense heat through his hands. While he's a hit at picnics with his ability to cook hot dogs in six seconds flat, well...let's just say that going to the bathroom has become quite problematic for poor ol' Scott.



MORTOMETER

picks

FOR BOOKS SHIPPING IN SEPTEMBER

bookofthemonth

AVENGERS #22

MARVEL The "Ultron Unlimited" storyline comes to a rip-snortin' climax, as the mechanical nuisance throws down with not one, but two Avengers teams. And it looks like only Justice can save 'em all! Hoo boy. "This issue will resolve certain long-standing character plotlines at the same time it heats up other long-standing character plotlines," says long-standing writer Kurt Busiek. "It'll also feature a lot of big-time, knuckle-bruisin', heavy-metal action!" Sweet potatoes! Also on the agenda: a milestone in the life of Giant-Man. By Busiek, George Pérez and Al Vey. **$1.99**

ASTONISHING X-MEN #3 (OF 3)

MARVEL The X-Men face Death, and Death wins. Just kidding. Actually, this epic battle leads to a major (and we mean major) war between Apocalypse and the Twelve. By Howard Mackie, Brandon Peterson and Tim Townsend. **$2.50**

ASTRO CITY #19

WILDSTORM/DC Steeljack is in one heck of a fix. Not only is the metal man wanted by the cops, but he's the only guy who knows that the crap's really about to hit the fan in Kiefer Square. Sure, Honor Guard could lend a hand, but Steel's an ex-con, and no one trusts ex-cons. Just ask our parole officers. By Kurt Busiek, Brent Anderson and Will Blyberg. **$2.50**

AVENGERS FOREVER #12 (OF 12)

MARVEL The Time-Keepers are out to destroy reality, and the Earth's Mightiest Heroes plan on bringing them in for some questioning. Plus, Kang dukes it out with Immortus. But...uh...isn't Kang really Immortus? Ow...head...hurt. By Kurt Busiek, Roger Stern, Carlos Pacheco and Jesus Merino. **$2.99**

BATMAN BOOKS

DC COMICS "No Man's Land" continues its merry march as one of the coolest crossovers to hit the stands in a loooong time. *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight* #123 and *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* #91 feature the two-part "Underground Railroad," wherein the Penguin is the only hope for Gotham's deathly ill children. Meanwhile, over in *Batman* #571 and *Detective Comics* #738, "Goin' Downtown" features Two-Face caught in a gang war and Bane blocking Batman's way to save Gotham. By a bunch of guys that do real good work. **$1.99 each**

CAPTAIN AMERICA #23

MARVEL Cap in the pokey? It's true! Cap finally gets busted for making that illegal left out of McDonald's. That, and he's going undercover to expose a corrupt warden in some hellhole prison. Too bad a riot breaks out. Just don't drop the soap, pretty boy. By Mark Waid, Jay Faerber and Patrick Zircher. **$1.99**

DAREDEVIL #9

MARVEL After a successful run by Kevin Smith, Daredevil is a...heh...hot property again. And new writer David Mack

MR TITLES DENOTED WITH AN MR CONTAIN MATERIAL THAT'S SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS.

aims to keep it that way. In this issue, an anonymous stranger claims to know the Kingpin's criminal empire from the inside out. And if there's one thing you don't want to see from the inside out, it's the Kingpin. Shudder. By Mack Daddy, Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti. **$2.50**

DAY OF JUDGMENT #1-#5

DC COMICS A month just ain't complete without at least 20 crossovers to keep tabs on. "Day of Judgment" sees the fallen angel Azmodel freed from Hell and given the power to possess the Spectre. Once released, Azmodel freezes Hell over (literally) and sends the condemned to Earth. It's up to DC's Finest to warm up Hell, send the dead back, and convince Jim Corrigan to rejoin the Spectre and end the destruction. Got all that? Whew. By Geoff Johns, Matt Smith and Steve Mitchell. **$2.95—#1; $2.50 each—#2-#5**

DEATHBLOW: BY BLOWS #1 (OF 3)

WILDSTORM/DC Y'know what blows? When you snarf down pizza and burn the roof of your mouth but don't realize it till the next day when that little flap o' skin hangs down and...oh, sorry. Anyway, Michael Cray returns, except *he's* now a she and fighting some punks who claim to be the real Deathblow. By the über-popular Alan Moore and Jim Baikie. **$2.95**

DIVINE RIGHT: THE ADVENTURES OF MAX FARADAY #12

WILDSTORM/DC The tumultuous story of a pizza-delivery boy turned demented deity wraps up in this final issue. (And according to our calculations, it's only like 64 months off schedule.) It seems Max has beaten down the Wildcats and Gen13. So who's gonna stop him? His girlfriend Suzie, of course. Note to kids: Women always win. By Jim Lee, Scott Lobdell and Scott Williams. **$2.50**

DOMINATION FACTOR #1.1-#1.2 (OF 8)

MARVEL Admit it. You slept through another year of math class and missed the decimals lecture. Shame, shame. Well, Marvel's here to help with two interconnected mini-series. The Fantastic Four and the Avengers will run concurrent *Domination Factor* mini-series alternating issue numbers, for a total of eight installments. FF is #1.1, while Avengers is #1.2. Then it'll go #2.3, #2.4, #3.5, etc. As for the story, it seems the Fantastic Four and the Avengers fool around with time travel to discover why the world has ceased movement. By Dan Jurgens, Jerry Ordway, Bob McLeod and Dennis Janke. **$2.50**

EARTH X #8 (OF 12)

MARVEL The terrible secret behind Earth's mutant transformation is revealed, along with epical (epical?) battles including the Skull versus the Goblin and Venom (Spidey's daughter) versus the Iron Maiden. Excellent! By Alex Ross, Jim Krueger, John Paul Leon and Bill Reinhold. **$2.99**

FANTASTIC FOUR #23

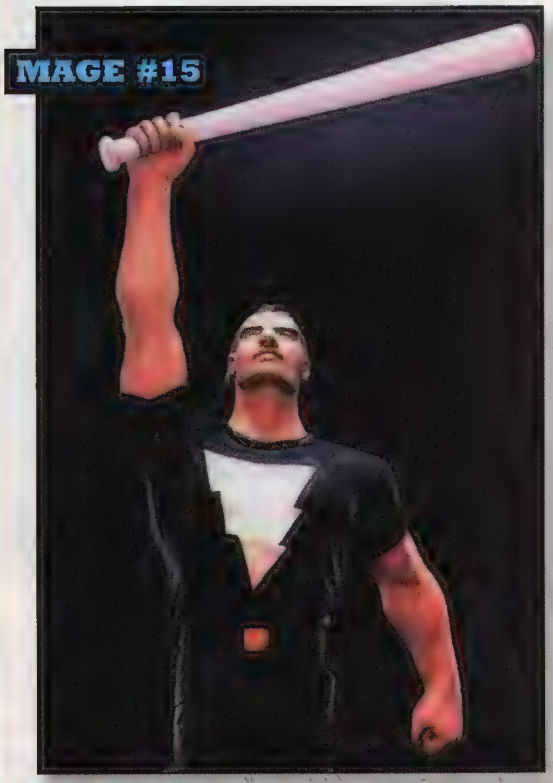
MARVEL The FF invade a comic book convention in pursuit of a cure to the nanite infection that's got the Thing feeling a little loopy. (And everyone knows comic cons are the perfect place for infections!) By Chris Claremont, Salvador Larroca and Art Thibert. **$1.99**

GREEN LANTERN #118

DC COMICS Women. They'll bring you down every time. Just ask Kyle Rayner (a.k.a. Green Lantern), who attempts to sort out his relationship with the Titans' yummytastic Donna Troy. He's also got to deal with hellfire exploding through the streets, courtesy of the "Day of Judgment" crossover. We'll take the hellfire. By Ron Marz, Darryl Banks and Anibal Rodriguez. **$1.99**

HULK #8

MARVEL Wolverine comes blowing into town with his shorts in a bunch. And hey, this ish marks the 25th anniversary of their first encounter, which featured Logan's debut. Of course, back then he had an adamantium skeleton. This time, Ol' Greenskin is liable to lay the smack down on him. By Byrne, Ron Garney and Dan Green. **$1.99**



INHUMANS #11 (OF 12)

MARVEL This kick-ass (though a tad on the late side) miniseries nears an end as Black Bolt attempts to retake his home turf and Attilan fends off attacks from all sides. And you know with only one issue to go, Black Bolt's just gotta say something. He's just gotta! By Paul Jenkins and Jae Lee. **$2.99**

JLA #35

DC COMICS It's aftermath from the "Day of Judgment" storyline, as the Spectre is forced to look into the evil that exists within the JLA. Evil, you say? Why, sure—just look under Plastic Man's bed. By J.M. Dematteis, Mark Pajarillo and Walden Wong. **$1.99**

MAGE: THE HERO DEFINED #15 (OF 15)

IMAGE "It's certainly a grand finale, and it's full of surprises," says writer/artist/Kevin Smith-friend Matt Wagner of the conclusion to the second part of his Mage trilogy. You can count on Kevin Matchstick to beat foes senseless with his magic baseball bat, while the Heroic Alliance takes on the Pale Incanter. "It'll really bring readers full circle in line with the first series and take 'em in new directions for the third one." By Wagner. **$5.95**

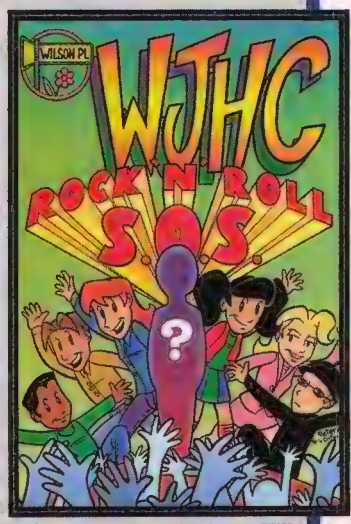
NIGHTWING #37

DC COMICS More jail fun! Nightwing attempts to take back Blackgate Prison from an army of loony cons who'd really rather make their own rules. Some mornings it's better to just stay in bed. By Chuck Dixon, Scott McDaniel and Karl Story. **$1.99**

on the edge

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

WJHC #2



WILSON PLACE COMICS High school, for all intents and purposes, exists to make you suffer. You didn't get the full experience unless you cried yourself to sleep at least every other night, cradling your blanket, alternately begging God to have mercy on your sanity and promising the devil your soul if Courtney Carroll from chemistry class would just agree to see "Ghostbusters" with you...or so we hear. Anyway, the gang at Jackson Hill High have it differently. They're mostly concerned with keeping their school radio station, WJHC, afloat after the school PA system was blown up. Uh...wait, that's it? What the hell kinda lame comic story is that? You'll have to see for yourself at **$1.95.**

PREACHER #55

VERTIGO/DC Nothing's more fun than digging up dirt on friends. The blackmail possibilities are endless. But Jesse Custer ain't interested in that: He just wants to know what makes his pal Cassidy tick, and he might have found someone with all the answers. But does he really want to know? By Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon. MR. **$2.50**

RISING STARS #2

TOP COW/IMAGE Learn the life and death of Peter Dawson, an invulnerable man who was, apparently, not all that invulnerable. He's, uh, dead, after all. But it makes for some good readin'. By J. Michael Straczynski, Keu Cha and Jason Gorder. **$2.50**

ROBIN #70

DC COMICS Poor Mr. Freeze. He goes from a kick-ass animated foe to a lame-ass movie star. Well, he's apparently still holding a grudge, 'cause in this issue he torments Robin and a bunch of kids living underground. "We have a scene where he flash-freezes a rat and breaks it like a champagne glass just to show he means business," says writer Chuck Dixon. Yep, sounds like the healing has yet to begin. By Dixon, Gordon Purcell and Wayne Faucher. **$1.99**

WIZARD SPECIAL EDITION
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newreleases

FIRST TIME OUT

ARMAGEDDON #1 (Chaos!) The Father of Fear shows up to harass the Chaos! roster of heroes. Some are due for a good spanking, no doubt. $2.95

AVENGERS #1 1/2 (Marvel) Learn how the Avengers got to know each other and put Jarvis in his place, courtesy of Roger Stern and Bruce Timm. $2.50

AVENGERS: UNITED THEY STAND #1 (Marvel) This funky new ongoing comic series ties right into the funky new animated series. $2.99

BALL AND CHAIN #1 (WildStorm/DC) A married couple near splitsville gets zapped by meteor rays and discovers their new powers only work when they're next to each other. Bummer. $2.50

BATMAN BEYOND #1 (DC Comics) Based on the hit animated series, baby. Future Batman takes on a decrepit, Depends-clad Bruce Wayne. $1.99

BATMAN/TARZAN: CLAWS OF THE CATWOMAN #1 (Dark Horse) Two men. One woman. One odd crossover. MR. $2.95

BATMAN: DAY OF JUDGMENT (DC Comics) Bats defends the rubble-strewn Gotham from undead perps. How discouraging. $3.95

CRIMSON SOURCEBOOK #1 (WildStorm/DC) The *Crimson* cast is explored in mind-numbing detail. $2.95

DAY OF JUDGMENT SECRET FILES #1 (DC Comics) Get all the poop on DC's supernatural heroes and villains. $4.95

DESPERADOES: EPIDEMIC! (WildStorm/DC) The gun-totin' team rides into a town under quarantine. Yee-haw! $5.95

FAITH #1 (Vertigo/DC) There's Heaven, Hell and...Murr? Get the skinny on Door #3 right here. MR. $2.50

GLORY #1 (Awesome) Glory goes undercover as a waitress to discover the meaning of life and bad tips. Works for us. $2.99

JLA: SUPERPOWER (DC Comics) Mark Antaeus longs to join the JLA and just be one of the guys. Find out if he's got the goods here. $5.95

JUGGERNAUT: THE EIGHTH DAY (Marvel) One Juggernaut is bad enough. Seven of them is just asking for trouble. Helloooooo, trouble! $2.99

SUPERMAN & SAVAGE DRAGON: METROPOLIS (DC Comics) Boo-yah! The big guys pound each other senseless. $4.95

TERMINATOR: THE DARK YEARS #1 (Dark Horse) "I'll be back... and back...and back..." It's enough time-travel hooey to give you a raging headache. $2.95

THE TENTH: EVIL'S CHILD #1 (Image) Gozza finally finds the Tenth power and immediately wishes he hadn't. $2.95

WHITEOUT: MELT #1 (Oni Press) Deputy Marshal Carrie Stetko investigates an explosion on a Russian base. Memo: Don't eat the yellow snow. MR. $2.95

WITCHFINDER #1 (Image) Morand the Priest teams up with Matthew Hopkins to combat heretics. $2.95

ZORRO: MATANZAS! #1 (Image) ¡*Ole*! The Spanish Swashbuckler returns to open up a can of *el asso de whup*! $2.95

SAVAGE DRAGON #67

IMAGE Tee-hee! The Dragon is still a pint-sized piece of nothing, thanks to a Martian shrinking ray. So we get to follow SuperPatriot as he penetrates the Covenant of the Sword stronghold and attempts to slaughter a small child. But it's okay! Ya see, the kid is gonna grow up to be the bloodthirsty DarkLord. We think. By Erik Larsen. **$2.50**

SIN CITY: HELL AND BACK #3 (OF 9)

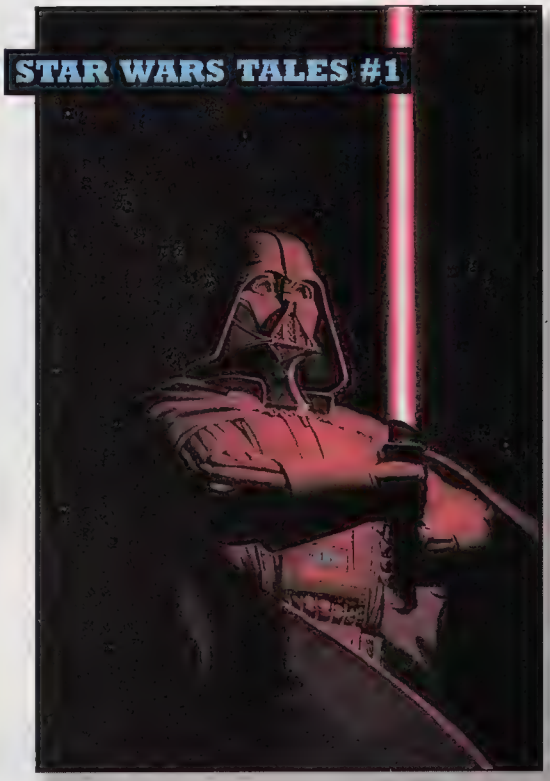
DARK HORSE However bad things get in Sin City, they can always get worse. While Wallace is still in Basin City, hard at work torking off the corrupt cops and looking to bring justice to the lawless town, we learn more about the Colonel and his nefarious plans for Esther. By Frank Miller. **MR. $2.95**

SPAWN BOOKS

TODD MCFARLANE PRODUCTIONS/IMAGE In *Spawn* #90, Spawn has to listen to three suspects' different versions of what caused some poor sap's death. But which of the three is the homicidal maniac? Put your hand down! By Todd McFarlane, Brian Holguin, Greg Capullo and Danny Miki. And in *Spawn: The Undead* #4, a cult believes a mass suicide will strengthen Heaven's Army. By Paul Jenkins, Dwayne Turner and Chance Wolf. **$1.95 each**

SPIDER-MAN BOOKS

MARVEL Spidey continues to march along to his own less-than-mediocre drummer. In *Amazing Spider-Man* #11, the Blob shows his fat face and MJ deals with a stalker. By Howard Mackie, John Byrne and Scott Hanna. Over in *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* #11, the Web-head gets sucked into a crossover and teams up with the Avengers to fight bad guys. Hoo-friggin'-hah. By Mackie, John Romita Jr. and Scott Hanna. **$1.99 each**



THE HALLOWEEN ISSUE!

THE TOY MAGAZINE #28

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what I'm reading

PRO PICKS

KURT BUSIEK

(writer of *Avengers, Astro City, Thunderbolts, Iron Man*)

"I can't live without *Savage Dragon* by Erik Larsen. It's pound for pound the best traditional superhero book going, and has been for years. Close on its heels is *Superboy* by Kesel and Grummett. It's always fun, always fresh. It's a couple of creators having a really great time, and it shows. And I'm really enjoying the ABC titles from WildStorm, like *Promethea*."

STAR WARS TALES #1

DARK HORSE A new quarterly anthology launches, with stories designed to move in and out of continuity. Meet Skippy the Jedi Droid, see Vader fight a retired Jedi, and watch Mara Jada meet Rebel General Madine. By Timothy Zahn, Ron Marz, Peter David and more! **$4.95**

STUPID, STUPID RAT TAILS: THE ADVENTURES OF BIG JOHNSON BONE #1 (OF 3)

CARTOON BOOKS Get your mind outta the gutter. The unwieldy title to this Bone prequel is just to get your attention. "Big" is actually the founder of Boneville and also possibly the reason rats no longer have tails. Trust us; it'll make sense when you read it. By Jeff Smith and Tom Sniegoski. **$2.95**

SUPERMAN BOOKS

DC COMICS Word up! Just one more month till the new Super-team jumps on board! So for the last pain-filled time, we'll start you with the stand-alone *Superman* #150 and a battle to the death between Supes and alien gladiators from another dimension. Then, over in *Adventures of Superman* #572, this Strange Visitor chick impresses Supes by saving a life, but over in *Action Comics* #759, the Strange One loses control of her powers and Supes must go to the last guy he wants to ask for help. And, uh, ask him for help. Lastly, in *Superman: The Man of Steel* #94, the Visitor tries to choose between Metropolis and her own piss-ass little burg. By a whole lot o' creators. **$3.95—*Superman* #150; all others $1.99 each**

THOR #17

MARVEL Thor vs. Juggernaut. What happens when Blondie cracks Jugs upside the head with Mjolnir? We gather they're both in for a world of hurt. But while Thor is screwing around, Odin's left fighting off the assault from the Enchanters all by his lonesome. It all gets "The Eighth Day" crossover off to a rousing start. "There isn't just one Juggernaut," Dan Jurgens hints of the crossover. "There are brothers and sisters, if you will." Will what? By Jurgens, John Romita Jr. and Klaus Janson. **$1.99**

THUNDERBOLTS #32

MARVEL The T-Bolts are in dire straits these days. U.S. Agent and the Jury are set to take them out, and the only thing stopping them is Citizen V. Maybe that's because the good Citizen knows the 'Bolts are the only bunch that can stop an impending disaster. By Kurt Busiek, Mark Bagley and Scott Hanna. **$1.99**

WILDCATS #5

WILDSTORM/DC There's nothing like making a midnight run to your local liquor joint. The night is young, your chick's looking better and better and you're on your way to numbing the pain. Of course, it doesn't help when you're at the counter and a gang of thugs decides to raise hell. Good thing a potential new member of the 'Cats steps in to clean house. By Scott Lobdell, Bryan Hitch and Paul Neary. **$2.50**

WITCHBLADE #35

TOP COW/IMAGE Sara's after some long-haired stud that leaves her stomach feeling all weird and stuff. And Level 42's awful experiments are exposed. Poor Fluffy. By Christina Z., Randy Green and D. Tron. And over in *Tales of the Witchblade* #8, the 'Blade is used against a goddess in ancient Egypt. By Michael Turner, Bill O'Neil and Christian Zanier. **$2.95—*Tales*; $2.50—#35**

WOLVERINE #144

MARVEL If they remade "The Odd Couple" with Marvel characters, you'd probably wind up casting Wolverine and Hercules. You've got your immortal, classy (well, somewhat classy) Greek god and your burping, hairy slob. It's a great recipe for comedy. Whoa, watch out, Herc! Logan didn't clean out the drain again! Ha! Anyway, these two yokels pick a fight with the Leader in this issue. By Erik Larsen and Mike Miller. **$1.99**

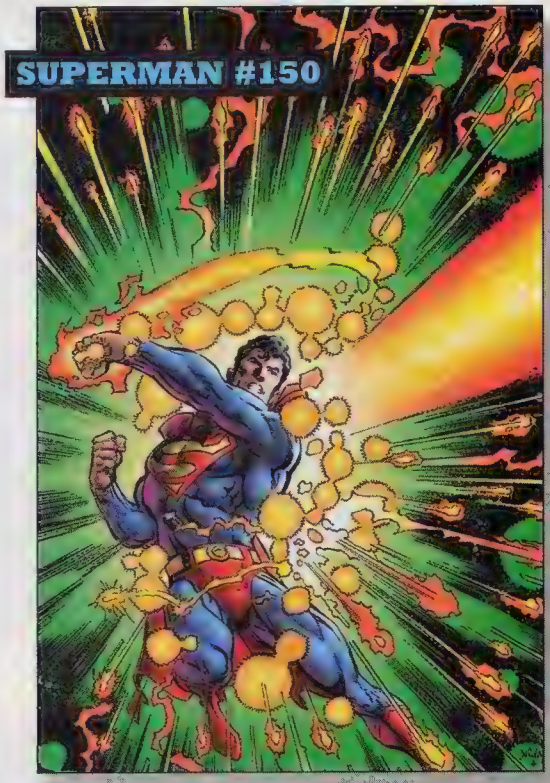


PHOTO BY PAUL SCHRADI

X-MEN BOOKS

MARVEL More angst and inner turmoil. Over in *Uncanny X-Men* #374, that nasty Rasputin guy returns, this time to harass Colossus and Marrow. Meanwhile, Deathbird presents a cult in Egypt with a nice gift. We'd check to see if it's ticking. By Alan Davis, Tom Raney and Adam Kubert. Over in *X-Men* #94, Rogue tries to find out who's tailing Mystique, and Shadowcat reads Destiny's diary. She's dead, so it's okay. By Alan Davis and Mark Farmer. **$1.99 each**

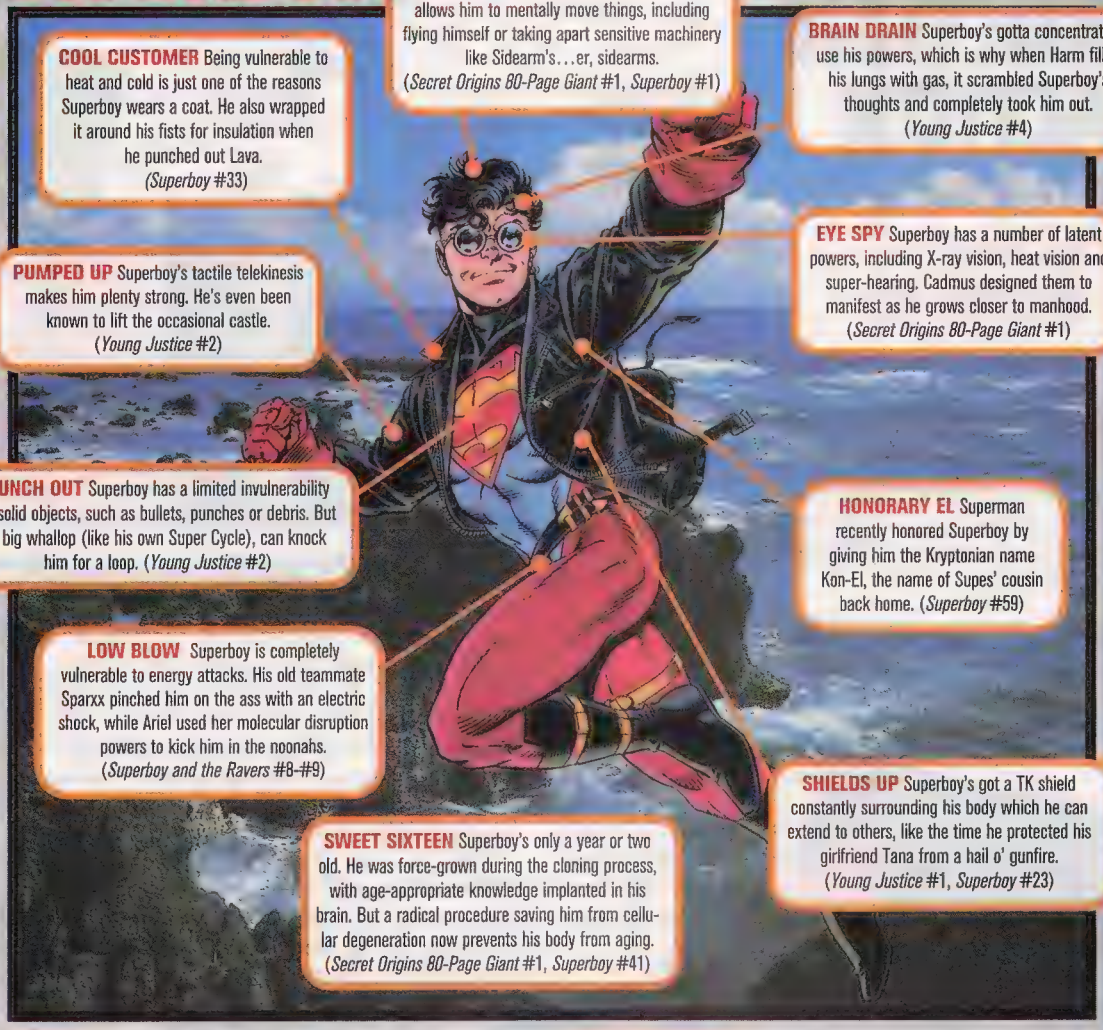
X-MEN: CHILDREN OF THE ATOM #1 (OF 6)

MARVEL This wacky retelling of the mutants' origin offers some new insights into Marvel's Merriest Mutants. Back in a time when the world's just discovering what a mutant is, two guys start a personal conflict that'll engulf all of mutants some day. Learn how Xavier brought the team together, and how Magneto got that broom stuck so far up his bum. By Joe Casey and Steve Rude. **$2.99**

characterprofile

RAP SHEET

SUPERBOY



HEAD GAMES Superboy's tactile telekinesis allows him to mentally move things, including flying himself or taking apart sensitive machinery like Sidearm's…er, sidearms. (*Secret Origins 80-Page Giant* #1, *Superboy* #1)

COOL CUSTOMER Being vulnerable to heat and cold is just one of the reasons Superboy wears a coat. He also wrapped it around his fists for insulation when he punched out Lava. (*Superboy* #33)

BRAIN DRAIN Superboy's gotta concentrate to use his powers, which is why when Harm filled his lungs with gas, it scrambled Superboy's thoughts and completely took him out. (*Young Justice* #4)

EYE SPY Superboy has a number of latent powers, including X-ray vision, heat vision and super-hearing. Cadmus designed them to manifest as he grows closer to manhood. (*Secret Origins 80-Page Giant* #1)

PUMPED UP Superboy's tactile telekinesis makes him plenty strong. He's even been known to lift the occasional castle. (*Young Justice* #2)

PUNCH OUT Superboy has a limited invulnerability to solid objects, such as bullets, punches or debris. But a big whallop (like his own Super Cycle), can knock him for a loop. (*Young Justice* #2)

HONORARY EL Superman recently honored Superboy by giving him the Kryptonian name Kon-El, the name of Supes' cousin back home. (*Superboy* #59)

LOW BLOW Superboy is completely vulnerable to energy attacks. His old teammate Sparxx pinched him on the ass with an electric shock, while Ariel used her molecular disruption powers to kick him in the noonahs. (*Superboy and the Ravers* #8-#9)

SHIELDS UP Superboy's got a TK shield constantly surrounding his body which he can extend to others, like the time he protected his girlfriend Tana from a hail o' gunfire. (*Young Justice* #1, *Superboy* #23)

SWEET SIXTEEN Superboy's only a year or two old. He was force-grown during the cloning process, with age-appropriate knowledge implanted in his brain. But a radical procedure saving him from cellular degeneration now prevents his body from aging. (*Secret Origins 80-Page Giant* #1, *Superboy* #41)

ORIGIN

When Superman "died" at the hands of Doomsday, Project Cadmus set about cloning him so Metropolis would still have a superpowered protector. Unable to completely crack his Kryptonian DNA, they created the closest human equivalent: Superboy, who has powers similar to Superman's but based on tactile telekinesis. Pretty hot-headed at first, Superboy got downright hostile if anyone called him anything other than "Super*man*." Since the original returned, however, the Kid's accepted his "Junior Superman" role and become a trusted member of the Superman Family. Although he knows he won't grow up to become his idol Superman, Superboy's dedicated to being the closest thing possible, constantly asking himself, "What would Superman do in this situation?"

NOW APPEARING

As well as fighting alongside his buddies Robin and Impulse in *Young Justice*, the Kid also has his own monthly adventures in *Superboy*. Look for a major new storyline called "The Evil Factory" to start in issue #70, later this year. "In it, Project Cadmus finally does the unethical and immoral things that the public always assumes people who muck around with DNA will actually do," says writer Karl Kesel. "This is going to change public perceptions about Cadmus in a huge way." Beginning around #74, *Superboy* finally crosses over with *Young Justice*. "Superboy will likely develop one romance in *Superboy* and another in *Young Justice*," says Kesel. "He'll wind up with a number of girlfriends, all coming to a head with disastrous results."

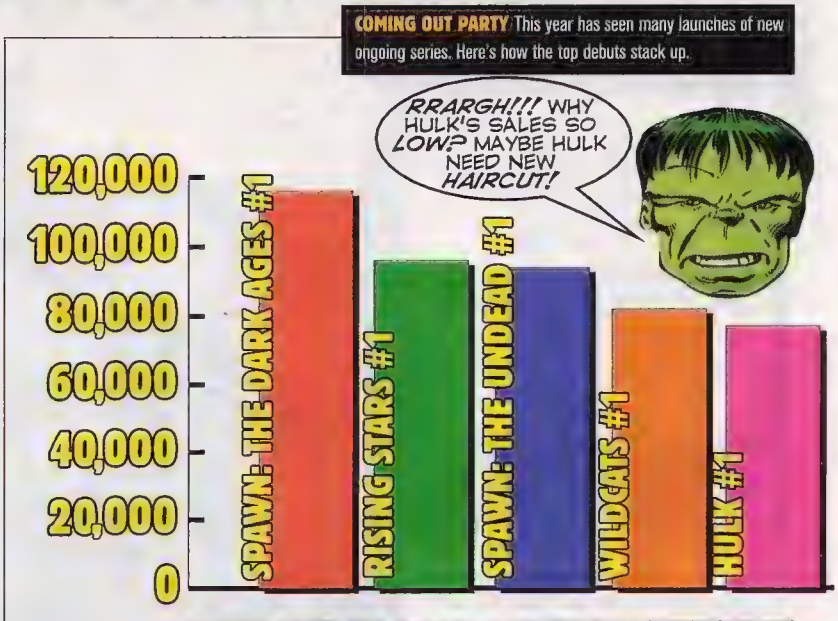
COMIC MARKET NEWS AND SUCH by Lars Pearson

MARKET WATCH

AUCTION ACTION

Alex Ross, Kevin Eastman net $269,000 for worthy causes

The annual comic book auction at Sotheby's auction house is quite possibly the *ultimate* gathering of rare comic book goodies. This year, when the final hammer fell, the market truly felt its impact.



COMING OUT PARTY This year has seen many launches of new ongoing series. Here's how the top debuts stack up.

SOURCE: Diamond Comic Distribution; sales figures represent initial direct market orders.

Peace on Earth

Alex Ross wrote UNICEF a $76,473 check.

When *Superman: Peace on Earth* was printed in late 1998, artist Alex Ross announced that proceeds from sales of its original art would be donated to help relieve world hunger. Few Ross pieces are offered on the market, and certainly not *en masse* like they were at this event.

The *PoE* cover, which hammered home $6,325, was hardly the top sale. A grouping of pages two through five, depicting the Man of Steel planting a Christmas tree in Metropolis, sold as a set for $10,350. But the biggest ticket of all was the spread of pages 26-27, with Superman flying over Earth as the reader sees a collage of needy faces. As one of the book's most dominant images, it raked in $13,800.

Put it this way: The cheapest *PoE* item sold was the page 50-51 spread, with Supes blurring as he makes a funnel, and it went for $3,737. All told, Ross' art raised big bucks for the United Nations Children's Fund *and* made a lot of collectors happy. Give the man a cheer.

WHIRLED PEAS The sale of Ross' painted Superman should help feed tons of starving children.

The Eastman Collection

It was a noble, $192,553 gesture, but just a little too late.

Kevin Eastman, owner of *Heavy Metal* magazine and co-creator of those wacky Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, auctioned 111 lots from his personal art collection. The proceeds were set to benefit the Words & Pictures Museum in Northampton, Mass. Unfortunately, the Museum announced it was closing shortly before

the auction.

Eastman's collection still went up, with a portion of the proceeds now benefiting the Words & Pictures Museum Internet site. Eastman's lots ranged from the Barry Windsor-Smith cover to *Uncanny X-Men* #186 (auctioned for $1,495) to a Michael Zulli piece from *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* #31 ($1,955) to the complete interior pages for *Punisher* (mini-series) #1 ($8,625). The money raised will help keep some of the museum's treasures available to Web surfers forever.

And yet more...

It's easy to forget how pricey some books can get—until you go to Sotheby's, that is.

Only 50 copies of *Marvel Comics* #1, with the first appearance of the Sub-Mariner and the Golden Age Human Torch, exist. Sotheby's hasn't auctioned one in three years, so the mid-grade copy offered up took home $19,550. But condition means everything, though, as a Very Fine,

SHORT SUPPLY There's only 50 other copies in existence!

unrestored copy of *More Fun Comics* #52 (the first appearance of the Spectre) beat it at $25,300.

And for those of you who laugh at anything from the modern age, a page of original Todd McFarlane art featuring Spider-Man dodging the vampire Morbius sold for $1,150. As if you could afford it anyway.

THREE HIDDEN GEMS

No matter how closely you watch the

TOP 10 CREATORS

FAN FAVORITES, CARTOON STYLE

These are the creators the fans crave. Creators whose name on a cover sells the book. *Wizard's* Top Ten Creators lists are derived from a nationwide retailer survey. Artists include pencilers and painters.

WRITERS

1. Kevin Smith
Daredevil, Clerks

2. Kurt Busiek
Avengers, Astro City

3. Alan Moore
Tom Strong, Top 10

4. Garth Ennis
Preacher, Hitman

5. Mark Waid
Flash, The Brave & the Bold

6. Dan Jurgens
Thor, Superman

7. Warren Ellis
Planetary, Authority

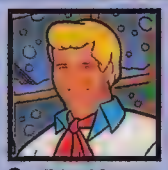
8. Grant Morrison
JLA, The Invisibles

9. Erik Larsen
Wolverine, Savage Dragon

10. Paul Jenkins
Inhumans, Spawn: The Undead

ARTISTS

1. George Pérez
Avengers



2. Michael Turner
Fathom

3. Adam Kubert
Uncanny X-Men

4. Alex Ross
Earth X

5. Joe Quesada
Daredevil

6. J. Scott Campbell
Danger Girl

7. Joe Madureira
Battle Chasers

8. Carlos Pacheco
Avengers Forever

9. Bart Sears
Spider-Woman

10. John Romita Jr.
Thor, P.P.: Spider-Man

BURIED TREASURE

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THIS

THE COVEN (vol.2) #2

Awesome Entertainment's mystical Coven doesn't have the best manners, but they *can* open a door for a lady.

The lady's name is Lionheart. *Coven* (vol. 2) #2 opened the door for her first appearance, seen when Coven member Phenomena tumbled through time and caught a glimpse of the future. The future, kiddies, is now.

Ian Churchill's new *Lionheart* series roared into stores in July. Already, Churchill's hyperdetailed art has fans talking. And since this first appearance came after *Coven* #1's high sales levels, it ain't the easiest find. Look for back-issue hunters to try to track down this beast. ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN**

PHOTOS: BUSIEK, SMITH, KUBERT, ROMITA, MADUREIRA, ROSS, TURNER, WAID, QUESADA, LARSEN BY PAUL SCHRALDI; MORRISON, MOORE BY BOB MARTIN; PÉREZ BY BOB SMITH; CAMPBELL BY JOHN W. MCDONOUGH

market, sometimes you get surprised, right? C'mon, how many of you *honestly* thought *Miracleman* #15 was going to get hot? This month, three more weirdo books emerged as big-ticket items:

• **All-Star Comics (vol. 2) #1 variant cover**—You probably didn't notice this variant—part of the recent "Justice Society Returns!" fifth-week event—because it was given *only* to attendees at a 1999 Diamond retail seminar in Baltimore, Md. The variant cover has mug shots of the Justice Society members in an homage to Golden Age splash pages. And if you can't tell from that, the variant's inside front and back covers are blank. Its rarity means it sells for a quick and easy $65.

• **Toy Fair Face-Off!**—"Toy Fair" is an annual event where toy manufacturers unveil their upcoming product for the next year to a whirlpool of publicity. As part of this, Marvel and Toy Biz released *Toy Fair Face-Off!* as an exclusive, wild and woolly comic where Spider-Man and Venom rumble through the Toy Fair showroom and describe Toy Biz's upcoming product, from MTV Celebrity Deathmatch figures to Kinder-Garden Babies dolls. It's a great Spidey oddball and a crisp $10 if you can find it.

TOY STORY Spidey and Venom go shopping in NYC.

• **G.I. Joe #21**—We could hardly believe it ourselves. *G.I. Joe* #21 is hot?! And selling for up to $25?!

Understand that the children of the '80s are now older, have more money and are exactly the right age to start reminiscing about toy tie-in comics such as *G.I. Joe* and *Transformers*. But while most *G.I. Joes* go for cover price, issue #21 burned a bright memory in the minds of fans. It was a completely silent issue, and also the debut of the mega-popular ninja Storm Shadow. It's tough to find, and the almost-solid black cover is damaged easily. Add it all up and the cost of nostalgia is $25.

Wizard Price Guide Manager Lars Pearson also damages easily. We've bagged and boarded him to preserve his Near Mint condition.

RETAILER NETWORK & V.I.P.s

RELIABLE SOURCES

Bruno Andreacchi
B.A.'s Comics & Nostalgia
121 Oxford St. East London
Ontario, Canada N6A 1T4
(519) 439-9636

Chris Barchuk
Wizard World
Rockland Center
51 E. Rt. 59
Nanuet, NY 10954
(914) 624-2224

Dave Braunstein
Eldorado Comics
2110 E. Rt. 70
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034
(609) 489-1199

Rich Conley
Heroes & Fantasies
914 Pat Brooker Road
Universal City, TX 78148
(210) 945-9884

D. Roberts & J. Walker
Legends Comics
Kentucky Oaks Mall
5101 Hinkleville Rd.
Paducah, KY 42001
(612) 822-2806

Dash Hobbeheydar &
Mark Laskowski
And Then it Rained Comics
P.O. Box 11041
Scottsdale, AZ 85271
(602) 990-9224

Steve Huber
Galaxy Comics
10 North 35th Street
Richmond, IN 47374
(765) 962-8239

Brian Kozicki & John Cathell
Buried Under Comics
188 West Middle Turnpike
Manchester, CT 06040
(860) 643-7295

Ivan Matos
Comic Connection
2128-C Fort Campbell Blvd.
Clarksville, TN 37042
(615) 572-9588

Ron McClure
American Comics and Cards
6787 Lee Highway
Chattanooga, TN 37421
(423) 490-0501

Avrom Oliver
Adventures in Comics & Games
6026 Fair Oaks Blvd.
Carmichael, CA 95608
(916) 973-9064

Jerry Ringi
Amazing Fantasy
4300 Portsmouth Blvd.
Suite 192
Chesapeake, VA 23321
(757) 465-8390

Tom Shea
TJ Collectibles
160 Main St.
Milford, MA 01757
(508) 473-5874

Steve Snyder
Central City Comics
1460 Bethel Rd.
Columbus, OH 43220
(614) 459-5045

Joel Thingvall
Nostalgia Zone
3149 1/2 Hennepin Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55406
(612) 822-2806

Doug Miers
Comics Conspiracy
115 A. East Fremont Ave.
Sunnyville, CA 94087
(408) 245-6275

Stuart Wagner
Caveman
1344 E. Battlefield
Springfield, MO 65804
(417) 882-2283

Robert Scott
Comickaze Comics
& Sportscards
5615 Balboa Ave.
San Diego, CA 92111
(619) 278-0371

Nolan Wyatt
Golden Apple Comics
7711 Melrose
Los Angeles, CA 90046
(213) 658-6047

Todd McDevitt
New Dimension Comics
Units 20-21
20550 Rte. 19
Cranberry Township, PA
16066-7520
(412) 776-0433

Phil Davis
B & D Comic Shop
602 Elm St. South West
Roanoke, VA 24016
(703) 342-6642

Damon McCulloch
Comics & Comix
6135 Sunrise Blvd.
Citrus Heights, CA 95610
(916) 969-0717

Robert Letscher II
Key Comics
PO Box 3855
Scottsdale, AZ 85271-3855
(602) 949-8499

John Chrusckinski &
Bruce Ellsworth
Tropic Comics
313 S. State Rd. #7
Plantation, FL 33317

James Elkins
Comic Connection
21280 Ft. Campbell Blvd.
Clarksville, TN 37042
(615) 572-9588

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Penguin Comics
3315 S. Wehwood
Springfield, MO 65804
(417) 551-2051

John Graziano
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1383 Highway 35
Middletown, NJ 07748
(908) 706-0102

Mark Thompson
Cold Cuts
5704 Calmor Ave. #1
San Jose, CA 95123
(408) 229-0930

Jamie Graham
5 East Chicago Ave.
Naperville, IL 60540
(630) 778-0700

Mike Johnson
Golden Apple
7711 Melrose Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90046

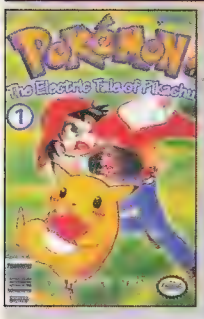
Brian Johnson
All About Books & Comics
517 E. Camelback
Phoenix, AZ 85012
(602) 277-0757

RETAILER NETWORK A-1 Book Exchange in St. Louis, Mo.; Back to the Past in Livonia, M.I.; Bali Book Store in Alphambra, Calif.; Beyond Comics in Medford, Ore.; Bob's Cards and Comics in Buzzard's Bay, Mass.; Book Barn inJoplin, Mo.; Book Trader in Minot, N.D.; Bookman's Used Books in Flagstaff, Ariz.; C & C Cards & Comics in St. Albans, W. Va.; California Card Company in Elk Grove, Calif.; Cards Coins & Comics in Davenport, Iowa; Clark's Comics in Hong Kong; Classic Comics in Philadelphia, Pa.; Classic Comics #2 in Philadelphia, Pa.; Collection Connection in Greensboro, N.C., Collector's World in Anderson, In; Comic Archives in Apple Valley, Minn.; Comic Case in Trenton, N.J.; Comic Collector in Riverside, Ill.; Comic Den in Kew Gardens, N.Y.; Comic Encounters in Terrence, British Columbia, Canada; Comic World in Lincoln, Nev.; Comics, Cards and Stuff in Ft. Myers, Fla.; Comics & Cards Trading Post in Montgomery, Ala.; Comics Direct in Niceville, Fla.; Comics Galaxy in Singapore; Comics Plus in Los Banos, Calif.; Comics Plus in Middletown, N.J.; Comics Plus in Ocean, N.J.; Comics Plus in Wanamassa, N.J.; Comics Unlimited in North Bend, Ore.; Comix & More in Chino, Calif.; Dizzy's Dugout in Collinsville, Ill.; Duncanville Bookstore in Duncanville, Texas; E + C Books in Alliance, Ohio; Emerald City Comics and Collectibles in Seminole, Fla.; Excalibur C's., CD's. & G's. in Texarkana, Texas; Fandom's Comic World of Reno in Reno, Nev.; Fun House Toys & Comics in Orleans, Mass.; Golden Empire Bookstore in Bakersfield, Ohio; Golden Unicorn Comics in Hazleton, Pa.; Gypsy Witch Comics in Staunton, Va.; Heroes and Dragons in Columbia, S.C.; Heroes & Fantasies in San Antonio, Texas; Hot Comics East in St. Paul, Minn.; Hudmar Ltd. in Marlboro, Mass.; Independent Comics in Gainesville, Fla.; J & E Cards & Comics Ltd. in Baltimore, Md.; Key Comics in Scottsdale, Ariz.; Kim's Collectible Comics in Seabrook, Md.; Lionheart in Ranchos Palos Verdes, Calif.; Locker Room in East Liverpool, Ohio; Mac's Cards in Vernon, Conn.; Marie's Books & Things in Fredericksburg, Va.; Mr. Green's Comics in Dublin, Calif.; New Age Comics in Chico, Calif.; New Time Machine in Bradentown, Fla.; Night Flight in Salt Lake City, Utah; Nostalgia Zone in Minneapolis, Minn.; 1,000,000 Comix of Idaho in Boise, Idaho; Plus Comics in Roanoke, Va.; Rangeline Comics in Indianapolis, Ind.; Rhino Supreme Comics & Cards in Ridgefield Park, N.J.; Rockabilly Comics in Beverly Hills, Calif.; Rockbottom Comics in Columbia, Ma.; Seventh Star Comics & Gifts in Florence, S.C.; Showcase Collectibles in Alpharetta, Ga.; Showcase Comics & Cards in Selden, N.Y.; Southwest Comics in Del Rio, Texas; TJ Collectibles in Milford, Mass.; Taurus Comics in Port Huron, Mich.; The Card Connection in Columbus, Ohio; The Clubhouse in Encinitas, Calif.; The Comic Shop in Oswego, N.Y.; The Drawing Board in North Plainfield, N.J.; The Gamer's Den in Washington, Mo.; The Main Event in Casa Grande, Ariz.; TNT's Comic Market in Lawrence, Kan.; Twin Book Stores in Morehead City, N.C.; Warren's Bookstore in Lecanto, Fla.; Wilson's Comics & Cards in San Antonio, Texas; Wonder CD's + C's in Montpelier, Vt.; Wonder Years in Alpharetta, Ga.; Woodland Comics & Cards in Woodland, Calif.

TOP 10 comics

***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. These are the books ringing the registers this month...**

1 POKÉMON: THE ELECTRIC TALE OF PIKACHU #1



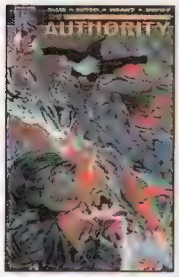
WRITER: Toshihiro Ono
ARTIST: Toshihiro Ono

By now, if it were not for Pikachu and his little "Pocket Monster" buddies, the entire comic book business would have collapsed. True! A few tumbleweeds, Jim Shooter's résumé, an odd stench and musty, dusty back issues of Marvel's *Bludwulf* would be all that was left. But since li'l Pikachu has (Warning: Bad pun ahead!) electrified a whole new audience and dragged them into comics, all is well. Never before has one yellow rat done so much for so many. **LAST MONTH: 1**

2 PLANETARY #1

WRITER: Warren Ellis
ARTIST: John Cassaday

The premise that this is a book about a team of "mystery archaeologists" sounds, well...stupid. But *these* archaeologists don't dig up hunks of old clay pots and crap like that. They track down Godzilla-sized monsters. They hang with ghost cops in Hong Kong. And they're written by Warren Ellis, the nuttiest Brit this side of Benny Hill. Put it together and *Planetary* is cooler than *any* archaeologist. 'Cept maybe Lara Croft. She's got nice hooters. **LAST MONTH: 7**



3 THE AUTHORITY #1

WRITER: Warren Ellis
ARTISTS: Bryan Hitch and Paul Neary

And Warren Ellis' superhero book is *also* on "Top 10 Comics." If that doesn't convince you Ellis is hotter than hell, maybe his new sitcom on Fox will. It'll be called, "That Wacky Comic Writer Who Moved to Melrose Place." We're sure it'll push the bounds of death scenes on TV. Or something. **LAST MONTH: NOT RATED (N.R.)**

4 EARTH X #1

WRITERS: Jim Krueger and Alex Ross
ARTISTS: John Paul Leon and Bill Reinhold

Alex Ross. Feh! The only reason this tale of a possible Marvel future gone horribly wrong is hot is 'cause the nation is gripped by a LEON FRENZY! Yep. Without Juggernaut John Paul to carry his sorry ass, Ross would be stuck painting magazine ads for $600,000 a year. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

5 SPIDER-GIRL #1

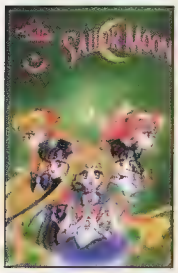
WRITER: Tom DeFalco
ARTISTS: Pat Oliffe and Al Williamson

We said it before, we'll say it again: *Spider-Girl* is cool. Each issue smacks of light, fun, action-packed and self-contained stories. So is it any wonder this jumping-on-point issue is in *mucho* demand? And if you're still wondering, well...go pick up the latest issue and you'll see what we're talking about, bucko. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

6 STAR WARS: P.M. ART COVER

WRITER: Jan Strnad
ARTISTS: Anthony Winn and Robert Jones

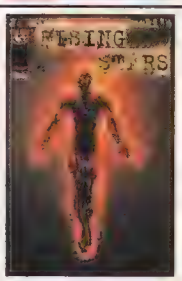
Fans covet the scarcer "art" cover of *Phantom Menace* #1. Must mean people are finally willing to make peace with Jar Jar Binks. Okay, maybe not. You're all allowed to whack him once with a bamboo reed. Or with soap in a sock. Or with a burlap sack filled with doorknobs. The line forms to the left. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**



7 SAILOR MOON #1

WRITER: Naoko Takeuchi
ARTIST: Naoko Takeuchi

The last time we saw a sailor moon, a ship sailed into port and some navy guy showed his lily-white ass. This *Sailor Moon* features chicks with large doe-like eyes in short skirts. With speed lines everywhere. And sparkly effects. And long, flowing hair dos. Beats the hell outta Popeye's bum. **LAST MONTH: 2**



8 RISING STARS PREVIEW

WRITER: J. Michael Straczynski
ARTIST: Keu Cha (pencils only—cool!)

It's limited, it's cool and it's the first appearance of the *Rising Stars* characters you will all soon come to know and love in this brand-spankin'-new Top Cow series. And there's a special bonus! If you run into Straczynski at a convention and can spell his name correctly, he'll give you a dollar! **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

9 LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN #1

WRITER: Alan Moore
ARTIST: Kevin O'Neil

It's a comic about all those crappy "Victorian Era" literary characters they made you read in school. You know–Mr. Hyde, the Invisible Man, Captain Nemo, them guys. But this kicks ass! Just goes ta show ya: Alan Moore could whup H.G. Wells. **LAST MONTH: 4**

10 BLACK WIDOW #1

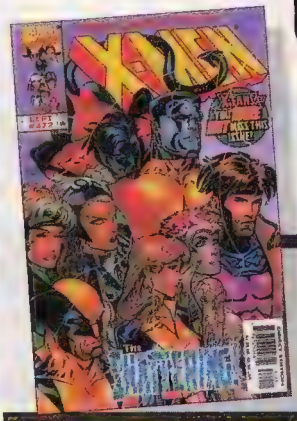
WRITER: Devin Grayson
ARTIST: J.G. Jones

The black widow spider mates, then kills. The two Black Widow ladies from this series wear skintight black leather, speak in sexy Russian accents, eat borscht and are agile enough to put their legs behind their heads. Hell, if we can do the "mate" part, it just might be worth the "kills"! **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

THE HIGHEST-ORDERED BOOKS FOR THE MONTH OF **JULY**

TOP100

Compiled by the *Wizard* Price Guide staff using data supplied by Diamond Comic Distributors.



The mutant offshoots known as the Mannites arrive in full force in *Uncanny* #372.

1. Uncanny X-Men #372 (Marvel)

2. X-Men #92 (Marvel)
3. Rising Stars #1 (Top Cow/Image)
4. Spawn #88 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
5. Astonishing X-Men #1 (Marvel)
6. Avengers #20 (Marvel)
7. JLA #33 (DC)
8. Wolverine #142 (Marvel)
9. Earth X #6 (Marvel)
10. Daredevil #11 (Marvel)
11. Fathom #8 (Top Cow/Image)
12. Spawn: The Undead #2 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
13. Amazing Spider-Man #9 (Marvel)
14. Fantastic Four #21 (Marvel)
15. Thor #15 (Marvel)
16. Peter Parker: Spider-Man #9 (Marvel)
17. Wolverine/Punisher: Revelation #4 (Marvel)
18. Captain America #21 (Marvel)
19. Avengers Forever #10 (Marvel)
20. Contest of Champions II #1 (Marvel)
21. Wildcats #4 (WildStorm/DC)
22. Spawn: The Dark Ages #5 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
23. Iron Man #20 (Marvel)
24. Mutant X #12 (Marvel)
25. JLA Annual #3 (DC)
26. JSA #2 (DC)
27. Top Ten #1 (WildStorm/DC)
28. Contest of Champions II #2 (Marvel)
29. Batman #569 (DC)
30. X-Men: True Friends #1 (Marvel)
31. Cable #71 (Marvel)
32. X-Men Unlimited #24 (Marvel)
33. Detective Comics #736 (DC)
34. Cy-Gor #1 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
35. Sin City: Hell & Back #1 (Dark Horse)
36. Crimson #13 (WildStorm/DC)
37. Gambit #8 (Marvel)
38. Generation X #55 (Marvel)
39. Hulk #6 (Marvel)
40. X-Force #94 (Marvel)
41. Galactus the Devourer #1 (Marvel)
42. Inhumans #11 (Marvel)
43. Spider-Woman #3 (Marvel)
44. Green Lantern #116 (DC)
45. Nightwing #35 (DC)
46. Spider-Man: Chapter One #11 (Marvel)
47. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #121 (DC)
48. Thunderbolts #30 (Marvel)
49. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #89 (DC)
50. Deathlok #1 (Marvel)
51. Flash #152 (DC)
52. X-51 #1 (Marvel)
53. League of Extraordinary Gentlemen #4 (WildStorm/DC)
54. Titans #7 (DC)
55. X-Man #55 (Marvel)
56. Tom Strong #4 (WildStorm/DC)
57. Divine Right #11 (WildStorm/DC)
58. Promethea #2 (WildStorm/DC)
59. Spider-Girl #12 (Marvel)
60. Preacher #53 (Vertigo/DC)
61. Darkness Infinity (Top Cow/Image)
62. Pokémon: Electric Pikachu Boogaloo #1 (Viz)
63. Batman Annual #23 (DC)
64. Superman #148 (DC)
65. Deathlok #2 (Marvel)
66. Action Comics #757 (DC)
67. X-51 #2 (Marvel)
68. Adventures of Superman #570 (DC)
69. Batman & Superman: World's Finest #6 (DC)
70. Superman: The Man of Steel #92 (DC)
71. Buffy the Vampire Slayer #11 (Dark Horse)
72. Gambit 1999 (Marvel)
73. KISS: The Psycho Circus #22 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
74. Alley Cat #1 (Image)
75. Young Justice #12 (DC)
76. Black Panther #11 (Marvel)
77. Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Angel #3 (Dark Horse)
78. Robin #68 (DC)
79. Spider-Girl Annual #1 (Marvel)
80. Deadpool #32 (Marvel)
81. Planetary #6 (WildStorm/DC)
82. Gen^{13} #43 (WildStorm/DC)
83. Star Wars #8 (Dark Horse)
84. Catwoman #72 (DC)
85. Authority #5 (WildStorm/DC)
86. Neon Cyber #1 (Image)
87. Supergirl #36 (DC)
88. Undertaker #5 (Chaos!)
89. Lionheart #1 (Awesome)
90. Ascension #18 (Top Cow/Image)
91. Azrael: Agent of the Bat #56 (DC)
92. A-Next #12 (Marvel)
93. Nova #5 (Marvel)
94. Green Lantern Secret Files #2 (DC)
95. Tellos #3 (Image)
96. All-Star Comics 80-Page Giant #1 (DC)
97. Starman #57 (DC)
98. Mr. Majestic #1 (WildStorm/DC)
99. Wonder Woman Annual #8 (DC)
100. Webspinners: Tales of Spider-Man #9 (Marvel)

TOP 100 HIGHLIGHTS

'RISING STARS' GOES SUPERNOVA

Rising Stars #1 (No. 3)
Gotta admit–it took us by surprise. You had to figure that *Rising Stars* (created by J. Michael Straczynski, the mind behind TV's "Babylon 5" and "Crusade") was going to be *something* of a hit. Straczynski's too popular–and Top Cow is too good a marketer–for it to fizzle. Yet few could have foreseen it hitting the lofty No. 3 hole. Even when you figure in the book's four-cover split, it's still a hit–and a book to watch.

Contest of Champions II #1 & #2; X-Men: True Friends #1 (Nos. 20, 28, 30)
Today's lesson? People will always turn out for Chris Claremont. The former longtime *X-Men* author is behind both the free-for-all battle of *Contest of Champions II* and the World War II-flashback *X-Men: True Friends*. And it's bonus time for Marvel–the bulk of *True Friends* was done years ago, and almost forgotten in a desk drawer. Fans still dig Claremont, especially when he writes X-Men properties.

Cable #71 (No. 31)
Hello, Mr. Liefeld! *Cable* moved up 11 slots and sold 10 percent better this month as Cable creator and artist Rob Liefeld joined writer Joe Pruett (*Magneto Rex*) in a new creative team-up. Notice how some fans will gripe, gripe, and gripe about Liefeld–but look how he turns out the vote. The guy sells.

Flash #152 (No. 51)
They say clothes make the man. A good example supporting this argument? *Flash* #152. The former Scarlet Speedster hurdled up the charts a strong 10 places this month, boosted by a new costume and the mystery of exactly who the hell's in the now-dark-red suit. Looks like new readers are jumping on for the ride.

Neon Cyber #1 (No. 86)
The unknown *Neon Cyber* lit up the charts pretty well, driven by the growing reputation of Pat Lee's Dreamwave Productions. Although Lee (*Darkminds*) is credited as the series' creator, *Neon Cyber* won't feature any actual Lee work beyond some alternate covers. What's that mean? Dreamwave is building a name, and could be a player from here on out.

Wonder Woman Annual #8 (No. 99)
Monkeys, monkeys, monkeys! Some might scoff at the "JLApe" crossover, a hot monkey-love storyline running through several DC Annuals. But consider: Annuals should *never* outsell their parent titles, yet *Wonder Woman Annual* #8 beat *Wonder Woman* #148 by eight slots. Who's stronger: the Amazon or the chimp? You just found out.

CLOSE-UP LOOK

Break it on down now! Here's a look at the top-selling books in a couple categories, with their overall Diamond Comic Distributors "Top 300" rankings in parentheses.

ON TARGET Creator Frank Miller hit the bullseye as *Sin City: Hell & Back* earned the Dark Horse winner's circle.

TOP 10 DARK HORSE BOOKS

1. Sin City: Hell & Back #1 (No. 35)
2. Buffy the Vampire Slayer #11 (No. 71)
3. Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Angel #3 (No. 77)
4. Star Wars #8 (No. 83)
5. Star Wars Handbook: Crimson Empire #2 (No. 106)
6. Grendel: Devil Child #2 (No. 129)
7. Aliens vs. Predator Annual #1 (No. 150)
8. Madman Comics #15 (No. 153)
9. Oh My Goddess!: The Fourth Goddess #3 (No. 161)
10. Ghost #11 (No. 162)

TOP 10 BIG BUCK BOOKS ($3.95 & UP)

1. Spider-Girl Annual #1 (Marvel, No. 79)
2. Green Lantern Secret Files #2 (DC, No. 94)
3. All-Star Comics 80-Page Giant #1 (DC, No. 96)
4. Superman Monster (DC, No. 113)
5. Aliens vs. Predator Annual #1 (Dark Horse, No. 150)
6. Backlash & Taboo's African Vacation (WildStorm/DC, No. 156)
7. Happydale: Devils in the Desert #2 (Vertigo/DC, No. 182)
8. Cable: Second Genesis (Marvel, No. 187)
9. Deadlands (Image, No. 188)
10. Acme Novelty Library #13 (Fantagraphics, No. 192)

LOOKING BACK

TEEN ANGST Bright and shiny it was, but a bit of the luster has worn off *Generation X*.

What topped the charts FIVE YEARS AGO?

1. Generation X #1 (Marvel)
2. Spawn #25 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
3. X-Men #38 (Marvel)
4. Uncanny X-Men #318 (Marvel)
5. WetWorks #3 (WildStorm/Image)
6. Wolverine #87 (Marvel)
7. WildC.A.T.s #14 (WildStorm/Image)
8. Batman #512 (DC)
9. CyberForce #8 (Top Cow/Image)
10. Superman #94 (DC)

X-Men writer Scott Lobdell and *Death: The High Cost of Living* artist Chris Bachalo were big names when they teamed to launch *Generation X*. Chromium was a big material to make a cover out of. And "X"? It's *always* the biggest letter in comics. But after the star power of Lobdell and Bachalo moved away, *Generation X* started tumbling. Today? The book is a mid-30s seller. But as creators, Lobdell and Bachalo still get royalty checks. Small ones.

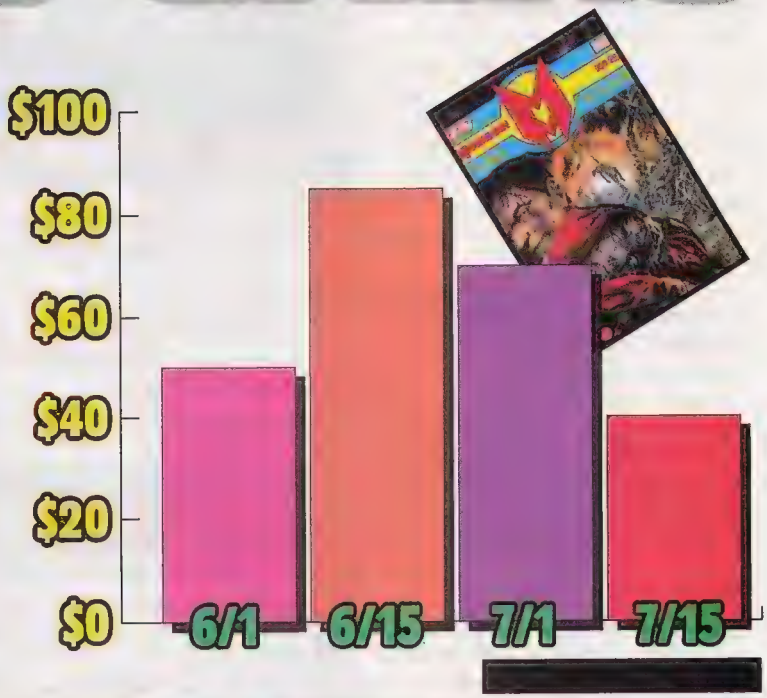
INTERNET REPORT FOR COMPUTER GEEKS EVERYWHERE! by Lars Pearson

'NET GAINS

MOORE'S MIRACLE

As Alan Moore gets hot, collectors look to the past

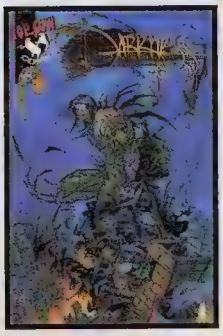
For a while, it looked like a miracle. As Alan Moore rocked the house with his new America's Best Comics line, fans turned their eyes to his 16-issue run on *Miracleman*, published by the now-defunct Eclipse Comics. The low-printed *Miracleman* #15 popped on the Internet at up to $85, but couldn't sustain those levels for long. Thrifty buyers waited for prices to fall to $40—still damn good for a book that was cover price just months ago.



ups & downs

GOING UP

Sold mainly at conventions and in limited fashion through comic stores, Top Cow's *Rising Stars Preview* sizzles as an Internet hit at $9 to $12 a copy. Meanwhile, Alex Ross' earliest work on Now Comics' *Terminator: The Burning Earth* scorches along with issue #1 maintaining a strong $10 price tag.



GOING DOWN

The Darkness prices plummet, blackened by the mass of its variants as issue #1 frequently sells online as low as $3. *Gen13* also tumbles, buoyed only by sellers who remember just the book's past success and overestimate opening bids. Most *Gen13* #1 variants now go for a piddling $5 or less.

ASSORTED CRAP REPORT

MERCH MADNESS

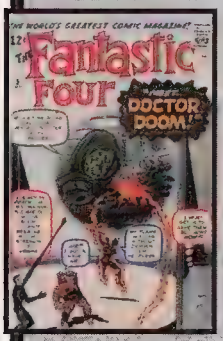
STATUES

If you can count on one thing in comic-related collectibles, you can bank on statues 'cause they rarely go down in value. But sometimes, bargains can be found on the Internet. The 1991 Sandman statue from DC was pushing $1,000 a few years ago, but one was recently snagged online for $450. Meanwhile, the recently released Nightwing Medium Statue that retailed for $90 is already pushing $130 in many online auctions. Also, keep your eyes peeled for occasional "artist's proof" versions of statues: extremely limited, preproduction figures given as gifts to creators. An artist's proof of Bowen Designs' Hunter Rose Grendel statue–one of only 10 in the whole freakin' world!–just auctioned for $510.

MERCHcont.

FRAME JOBS

Ya might think that original art must be published before it's worth something. But it ain't necessarily so: Sometimes, legendary comic artists make giant recreations of classic covers. One such item, a 20-by-14-inch reproduction of *Fantastic Four* (vol. 1) #5 (featuring the first appearance of Dr. Doom) was drawn by the late, great Jack Kirby before his death in 1994. On eBay, this work tapped out at $1,475–but failed to hit reserve.



POSTERS

Alex Ross and George Pérez are still the kings of posters, but other artists are holding their own. The 24-by-36-inch Fathom promo poster drawn by Michael Turner (most copies of which probably yellowed in retailers' windows) sold on eBay for $50. Even a Watchmen promo poster–for the extinct Mayfair Games roleplaying game, not the comic book, mind you–hit $18.50.

GOOD AS GOLD

While some buyers remain scared of big-ticket online sales, you couldn't tell it by a mid-grade copy of *World's Finest* #2, which hit home at $430. But that actually pales before a Very Good copy of *King Comics* #1, the first appearance of Flash Gordon, which sold for $850. And while most fans today laugh at Blue Beetle and the Phantom Lady, their appearances in a Very Good copy of *All Top Comics* #10 netted one seller $387.

MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL

HOW TO USE THE PRICE GUIDE

The **WIZARD** guide contains the most accurate and up-to-the-minute comic book prices possible. Keep in mind that the Price Guide is only a guide; prices may vary depending on the local availability and popularity of a title.

IT'S EASY... The price guide is arranged alphabetically by title. Listings for trade paperbacks, annuals, one-shots and graphic novels are found after the regular listing for a title, and are likewise listed alphabetically. When a title has been used several times for different series, like *Legion of Super-Heroes* or even *Fantastic Four*, we list all series under that title chronologically.

You'll notice some book listings have color bars. Red means it's risen in value; blue, fallen in value; green, new issues and/or title listings; and yellow indicates heavy market trading activity, yet no change in value since last issue.

ALPHABETICAL ARRANGEMENT

After skipping articles "A," "An," and "The" at the beginning of a title, alphabetization is word by word, not letter by letter. Ex: "The Amazing Spider-Man" is listed under "Amazing," but "Batman: Sword of Azrael" comes before "Batman: The Animated Movie" because we include the article "The" when it's an interior part of the title. All titles starting with the word "Star," including "Star Wars," come before titles such as "Stardust" and "Starman." Abbreviations such as "Dr." are listed before titles like "Dragon" but after titles starting with "Doctor." Numeric titles such as "2099 A.D." will be mixed in alphabetically as if the numeral were spelled out as "Two thousand ninety-nine."

REFERENCES

SECRET DECODER RING

❶	First Appearance of
anniv	Anniversary issue
A	Appearance
B	Begin stories with
C	Cameo that pre-dates ❶
cvr	Cover
D	Death/Destruction of
GN	Graphic Novel
HC	Hardcover
IR	Identity revealed
J	Joins
L	Last story with
M	Married
O	Origin
p	part #
PF	Prestige Format
Q	Quits
R	Return of
SC	Softcover
sz	Size
TPB	Trade Paperback
w/	With
w/o	Without

MAKING THE GRADE

All prices listed in this guide are for Near Mint (NM) condition. When your comic isn't Near Mint, you can compute the price based on the percentages shown below. Keep in mind that everyone grades condition differently and many things factor into grading a comic: age, supply and demand for the various grades, retailer location, local availability, current popularity, and its specific condition. It might help if you grade comics on a 10-point scale, with 10 being perfect and 1 being crappy.

MINT (M): An almost perfect 9.8 to 10 on a 10-point scale! To be Mint, a comic must appear like the day it was printed–no nicks, dings or creases. No tears or shreds on corners, colors are crystal clear, cover gloss is still there and the staples are perfect. Many new comics fall short of Mint standards. Mint comics fetch 125-150% of price listed. Comics after 1970 in Mint should be priced at the Near Mint price, since Mint copies are not unusual for comics after 1970.

NEAR MINT (NM): A 9 on a 10-point scale. The book might appear to be Mint, but upon inspection, tiny flaws are seen. The gloss and color are outstanding. **ALL PRICES IN THIS GUIDE ARE FOR NM COPIES, WHICH ARE 100 PERCENT OF GUIDE LISTINGS.**

VERY FINE (VF): A 7 on a scale of 10. At first glance may appear Near Mint, but at closer range, you'll notice minor signs of use. VF comics are 70 percent of guide listings (75-80% for pre-1970 books).

FINE-VERY FINE (FVF): A 6 outta 10. Pages may be slightly yellow, but not brown or brittle in FVF books. Expect several tiny stress lines along the spine or covers and several tiny color flakes are permitted. The spine may have creases and corners may be slightly rounded, but great cover gloss remains. FVF books go for 50 percent of price guide listings.

FINE (FN): A 5 out of 10. Slightly better than average with obvious signs of wear, but still clean and bright without major creasing. Fine books go for 40 percent of price guide listings.

VERY GOOD (VG): A 3 out of 10. Average, at best. VG comics appear used, but not abused. They have creases and minor tears. Very Good books go for 15-25 percent of guide listings.

GOOD (G), FAIR (FR) and POOR (P): All are 1 or less out of 10. These books...suck. Heavily worn, these are the comics that have been re-read a lot. Good books go for 10 percent of price guide listings. Fair books can have loose pages or pieces missing from the cover and sell for 3 percent of listings. Poor books can have missing covers, pages, etc. These books go for 1 percent of listings.

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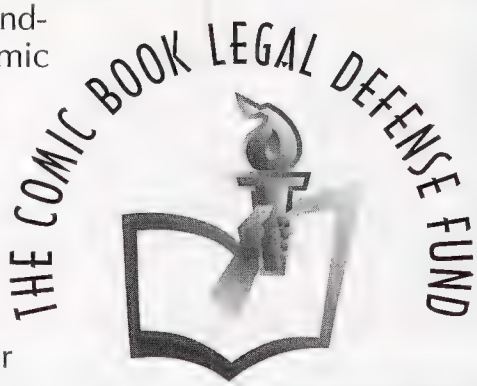

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C.B.I.Q.

YOU THINK YOU'RE SO SMART...

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Pass the remote! With it being time for the new fall season and whatnot, we're celebrating with a special cartoon (or "animated series," for you hoity-toity types) edition of C.B.I.Q. focusing on comic-booky stuff. We'll even rate you with TV grades: the more obscure and crappy the cartoon series, the higher your score.

SCORE	RANK
0	*"The Gary Coleman Show"*
1-5	*"Rubik the Amazing Cube"*
6-12	*"Rickity Rocket"*
13	*"Gilligan's Planet"*

1 What was the team roster in the pilot for the never-produced FIRST X-Men series?
A) Wolverine, Colossus, Nightcrawler, Shadowcat, Storm, Cyclops and Phoenix
B) Wolverine, Colossus, Nightcrawler, Shadowcat, Storm, Cyclops and Rogue
C) Wolverine, Colossus, Nightcrawler, Shadowcat, Storm, Cyclops and Dazzler
D) Wolverine, Wolverine, La Peregrine and Wolverine

2 As shown in "Batman Beyond," what will eventually happen to Bane?
A) He will die at the hands of his son, Rune.
B) He will become a mindless monster prowling the sewers of Gotham.
C) His use of the drug Venom will leave him a paralyzed, withered shell of a man.
D) Two words: explosive incontinence.

3 Which cartoon series portrayed a Wolverine who had an Australian accent and used his claws as shish kebabs?
A) "The Uncanny X-Men"
B) "Spider-Man and his Amazing Friends"
C) "The Rampaging Hulk"
D) "It's a Berserker Rage, Charlie Brown"

4 Which superhero NEVER made a "Super Friends" appearance?
A) Martian Manhunter
B) The Atom
C) Green Arrow
D) Hawkman, king of the continuity-f$#@ed superheroes

5 Which member of the FF had a non-continuity nephew star in his own series, and what was his slogan?
A) Mr. Fantastic: "Super-elastic, Kid Fantastic!"
B) Invisible Girl: "Math is hard!"
C) The Thing: "Thing ring, do your thing!"
D) Willie Lumpkin: "...I'm old. I can't stomach the taste of cat food anymore. I just can't."

6 Back in the '60s, what five Marvel heroes were featured in solo action cartoon shorts?
A) Captain America, Thor, Iron Man, Namor and the Hulk
B) Wolverine, Spider-Man, the Thing, Human Torch and Captain America
C) Spider-Man, Hulk, Thor, Captain America and Iron Man
D) Kid Bacon, Justice Turtle, Mr. Insatiable, Bill and Captain Asstoast

7 In the Hanna-Barbera FF cartoon, why did H.E.R.B.I.E. the robot replace the Human Torch?
A) The Torch already had a series of cartoon shorts in syndication, and the TV executives were afraid people would confuse the old series with the new.
B) Toy executives thought they could sell more H.E.R.B.I.E.-related merchandise than Torch-related stuff.
C) TV executives were afraid kids would light themselves on fire to emulate the Torch.
D) The French. It's always the goddamn French!

8 How did the Japan-release-only "Crisis on Infinite Earths" animated series differ from the American comics?
A) ...what are you, crazy? There's a cast of, like, 12 billion in *Crisis*. It'll never be made because every animator involved would put his eyes out with a sharpened paintbrush halfway through adapting issue #2. Move on to question #9.

9 "Batman/Superman Adventures" question #1: Who was responsible for the creation of the Creeper?
A) Ra's Al Ghul
B) The Joker
C) Bane
D) Mr. and Mrs. Creeper, a full bottle of wine and a roomy back seat in their Chevy Impala

10 "Batman/Superman Adventures" question #2: Who was the first to know that Krypton would soon explode?
A) Jor-El
B) Brainiac
C) General Zod
D) Nuklio, the Giant Cyborg-Pancake from Romulus 7!

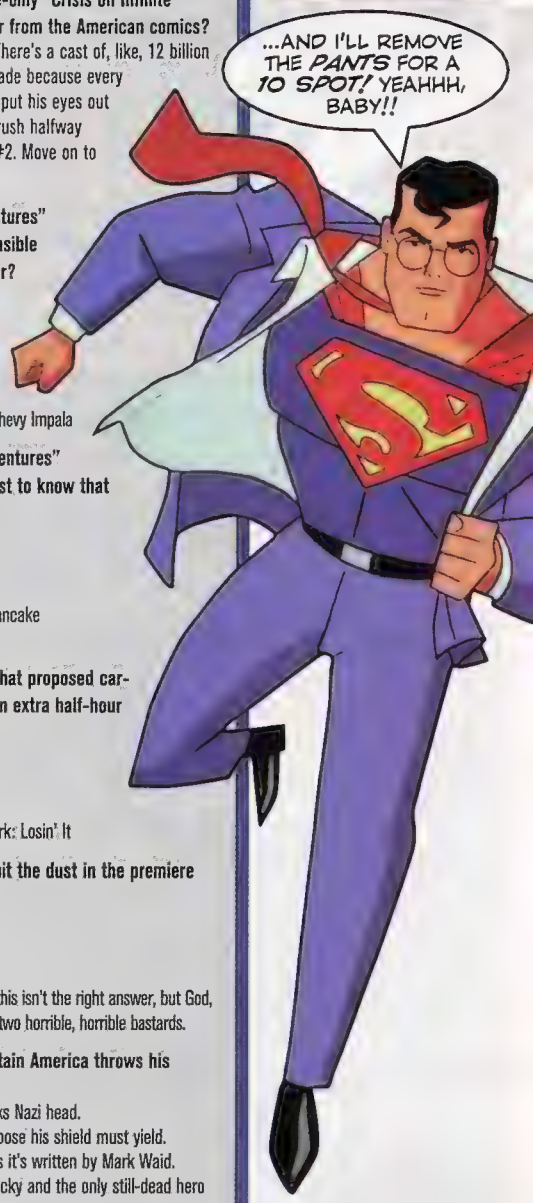
11 Back in the early '80s, what proposed cartoon series was beat out by an extra half-hour of "Smurfs"?
A) Avengers
B) Teen Titans
C) Justice League of America
D) *Wizard* Employees After Dark: Losin' It

12 Which mutant (sort of) bit the dust in the premiere episode of the X-Men?
A) Sunfire
B) Siryn
C) Morph
D) Artie and/or Leech. And no, this isn't the right answer, but God, somebody please off those two horrible, horrible bastards.

13 What happens when Captain America throws his mighty shield?
A) It flies with dread and boinks Nazi head.
B) All those who choose to oppose his shield must yield.
C) It's power won't fade unless it's written by Mark Waid.
D) You won't feel it if you're lucky and the only still-dead hero is Bucky.

ANSWERS

Candy-asses can peek on the next page if this is too tough...



COME OUT, COME OUT, WHERE-EVER YOU ARE!

BULLPEN SPECIAL EDITION

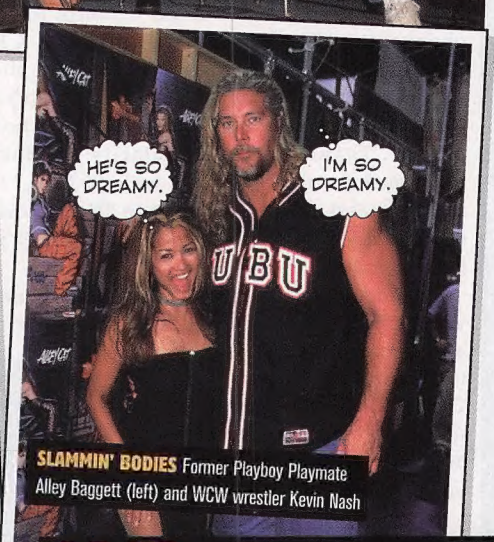
Postcards from Chicago!

A look at Wizard World '99

***Wizard* had a blast at this year's Wizard World Chicago convention on July 16-18! And how could we not? A bevy of comic pros like Jim Lee, Alex Ross and Guest of Honor Kevin Smith said howdy to the fans. Star Wars superstars like Ray Park (Darth Maul), Anthony Daniels (C-3PO) and tons of other "Men Behind the Masks" signed for folks as well. And wouldja believe pro-wrestling stars Kevin Nash, Raven and Paul Bearer hit the con to rap about comics! Heck, even us *Wizard* staffers were wowed by the hundreds of dealer booths selling comics, toys, original art, anime, posters...you get the idea. We can't wait to do it all again August 4-6 next year at the Rosemont Convention Center—and we hope to see you there, too!**

THE McLAUCHLIN GROUP From left: Jeph Loeb, Mark Waid, Brian Pulido, Erik Larsen and your host, *Wizard*'s own Jim McLauchlin.

KEVIN SMITH



SLAMMIN' BODIES Former Playboy Playmate Alley Baggett (left) and WCW wrestler Kevin Nash

C.B.I.Q. answers...

1. C	4. A	7. C	10. A	13. B
2. C	5. C	8. A	11. B	
3. B	6. A	9. B	12. C	

ALL PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHRAUCH

TIME TRAVEL by RUSSELL LISSAU

'KNIGHT' LIFE

'Batman: The Animated Series' lit a new Bat-signal in its smash debut seven years ago

After decades of dumbed-down kiddie fare, a TV cartoon finally took its audience seriously.

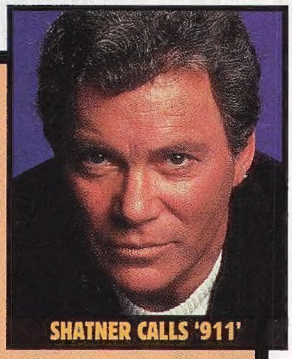
When "Batman: The Animated Series" premiered Sept. 5, 1992 on Fox, viewers finally saw that behind the masks were not absurd caricatures but gripping, complex characters that comic book fans knew and loved.

Most early televised attempts to animate superheroes may have been charming, but were definitely geared towards kids, from a '60s Superman cartoon to "Spider-Man and His Amazing Friends" in the early 1980s. Typical was "Super Friends," which stuck watered-down DC heroes with dorky teens and a dog wearing a cape. "There was a different attitude toward superheroes back then," recalls "Batman" writer/producer Paul Dini. "They weren't cool."

DATELINE

SEPTEMBER 1992

While Woody Allen wooed Soon-Yi offstage, **"Husbands and Wives"** featured his and Mia Farrow's breakup on-screen...**"Rescue 911"** shot into the Nielsen top 20 by showcasing thrilling rescues and William Shatner's hairpiece...Boyz II Men's **"End of the Road"** continued its 13-week sit atop the Billboard charts...Floridians began cleaning up the destruction wreaked by **Hurricane Andrew.**



SHATNER CALLS '911'

Then came "Batman," which was developed for Fox by Warner Bros. Animation. Although the most well-known TV version of Batman was from the campy '60s TV show, since the late '60s the comics had returned to creator Bob Kane's depiction of a dark and brooding Dark Knight. The creators insisted the cartoon remain true to that model. "It was absolutely essential," producer Bruce Timm says. The cartoon's portrayal of Batman was dead-on, and the goofy sidekicks and villains of the earlier shows were replaced by a headstrong Robin, a sarcastic Alfred, a frightening Joker, a sexy Catwoman and many other Bat-characters that leapt off the TV screen. This reverential approach made for great TV and delighted comics fans.

"They understood their own medium very well and they were respectful of ours," DC Batman Editor Denny O'Neil says. "The result was unique."

But it wasn't just fanboys who adored "Batman." Non-comics readers loved the show, too, especially its breathtaking artwork. Inspired by the excellent but short-lived '40s Superman cartoons by Max Fleischer, animators used black backdrops and retro '40s-style images to create the "dark deco" look and incredibly vivid characters. "We were trying to make it realistic to the point where you forgot you were watching a cartoon," Timm says. "The show didn't have to look realistic, [but] it had to be convincing."

As "Batman" has evolved through the years, there have been title changes (to "The Adventures of Batman & Robin" and then "The New Batman/Superman Adventures"), cast changes (the additions of Nightwing, Batgirl and the Tim Drake Robin) and network changes (to Kids' WB!). But those alterations have not lessened the show's impact. Thanks to the popularity of "Batman," comics-based cartoons have thrived lately, with "X-Men," "Spawn," "Batman Beyond" and others making it to TV. "Batman" influenced the comics industry, too, inspiring several DC and Marvel titles to imitate its animation style.

"Batman" also inspired one impressionable viewer to join the funnybook biz. "I had never even read superhero comics," says upcoming Batman writer Devin Grayson. "But ["Batman"] really made me believe in the characters and look at them in a whole new light." Take that, Super Friends!

ALWAYS ON TOP The Batman cartoon set a standard of excellence not met by misses like "Savage Dragon" or "The Marvel Action Hour."

1 Dream Of Peace
1 Dream Of War
5 Teens Who Will Determine The Future Of Mankind
X-MEN
Children of the Atom
1
S RUDE '99
6 uncanny issues by Joe Casey & Steve Rude
Learn How It All Began On September 15th
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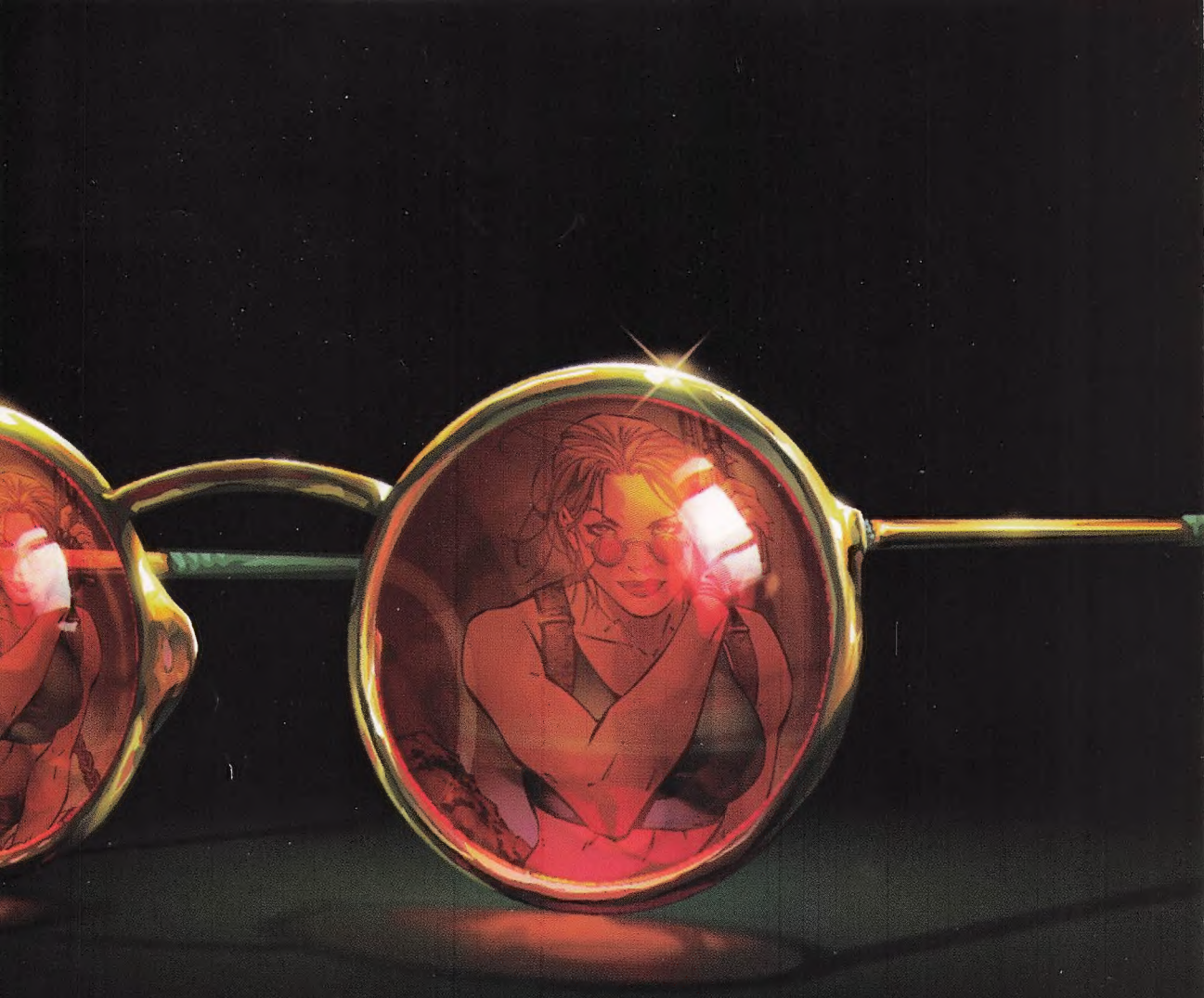

L1 L2 R1 R2

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